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# THE MODERN CHURCHMAN

A monthly Magazine to maintain the cause of
TRUTH, FREEDOM, and COMPREHENSIVENESS
in the Church of England.

EDITOR: H. D. A. MAJOR, B.D.

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THE

# MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

No. 12. MARCH, 1922. Vol. XI.

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

### The Attack on Modernists in Convocation.

The Psalmist's complaint, 'When I speak unto them of peace they make them ready to battle,' has been found applicable to many situations, and not least to the recent experiences of English Modernists. In the Conference Number of the *Modern Churchman* we pleaded with our Traditionalist brethren for a Truce of God, indicated its advantages from the point of view of the Church's influence, and outlined the policy needed to secure it. Our approaches have not only been indignantly and contemptuously rejected by representative Traditionalists, but have apparently encouraged them to prepare an elaborate attack on Modernists. Last month this culminated in the presentation to both Upper Houses of Convocation of the following Petition, signed by 120 members of the Council of the English Church Union.

*The Petition of the undersigned, the President and members of the Council of the English Church Union humbly showeth*

That a book entitled *The Modern Churchman,* volume eleven, numbers five and six, was published at Oxford by Basil Blackwell in the month of September, A.D. 1921.

That the said book, a copy of which is sent herewith, consists of a number of papers written by various persons, most of whom are clergymen of the Church of England, being papers read at a meeting or conference held at Girton College in the parish of Girton in the diocese of Ely in the summer of 1921, together with an introduction.

That the said book contains teaching that is contradictory of the Faith—to wit:

1. The doctrine of the unique and distinctive character of the being of God is denied.

2. The doctrine of the Incarnation as taught in the Creeds and in Holy Scripture is repudiated.

3. An idea that a divine character was infused into a human person is substituted for the Scriptural doctrine that 'the Word was made flesh.'

4. The authority of the Creed of the whole Catholic Church of Christ is repudiated.

5. A desire is expressed either to abolish Creeds or to formulate new in place of the existing Creeds.

Your petitioners submit that such teaching is entirely subversive of the Christian Faith and the Christian religion, and therefore calls for authoritative condemnation.

Your petitioners therefore must humbly and most earnestly pray your venerable House to take the doctrinal teaching contained in the said book into consideration and to pass judgment upon it.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

This Petition was supported in both Provinces by a *gravamen* from the Lower House of Convocation. That from the Lower House of Canterbury, signed by 64 members and presented by Dr. Darwell Stone, was couched in the following terms:

*Gravamen.*

Inasmuch as certain erroneous interpretations concerning the Godhead of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and His Holy Incarnation, and concerning the doctrine of the Holy Blessed and Glorious Trinity as set forth in Holy Scripture and the Catholic Creed, have been advanced by certain clergymen of the Church of England in a conference held at Girton, near Cambridge, in August, 1921, and since published in an authentic form in a magazine called the *Modern Churchman,*

And inasmuch as these opinions have been published far and wide in the daily Press and the minds of many have been deeply distressed thereby, the enemies of the Faith greatly encouraged, and the honesty of the clergy as a body seriously called in question:

*Reformandum.*

That this House humbly desires his Grace the President and their lordships of the Upper House to declare that such opinions are contrary to the teaching of the Bible and the Church.

The *gravamen* from the York Lower House was presented by the Rev. J. S. L. Burn (Vicar of All Saints,' Middlesboro'), who three years ago moved a resolution in the same House deeply deploring:

That the Archbishops' Committee on the Teaching Office of the Church should have seen fit to incorporate with it attacks upon the authenticity and inspiration of Holy Scripture, and upon other authorised formularies of the Church's doctrine.

We find it difficult to perceive what advantage those who have promoted the Petition hope to secure by it.

First, their statements contain gross misrepresentations and highly detrimental exaggerations. No doubt in the debate, which is arranged for the next Session of Convocation, an effort will be made to adduce proofs in support of these alarming and provocative statements. We hope that these 'proofs' will be explicitly based on actual citations, and not be mere rhetorical condemnations of supposed inferences and consequences. If Liberal Churchmen prefer to be tried for heresy not by ecclesiastics but by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, it is because in the latter case they can feel that their judges will not only be free from party prejudice, but will judge in accordance with the laws of evidence, and be strictly limited in their judicial procedure by rules which, in harmony with the English spirit of justice, allow the accused every reasonable means of defence. In Convocation, the Modernists, if condemned, would be condemned unheard, for we doubt if any of the readers of the papers at the Cambridge Conference, with the exception of the Dean of Carlisle, have seats in the Houses of Convocation; and even the Dean, not being a member of the Upper House, will have no opportunity of speaking in the debate on the Petition. It may therefore be the duty of Modern Churchmen to present a counter-Petition to both Convocations, rebutting the charges in general terms, and indicating the extreme disadvantages which the English Church suffers from the prolongation of theological controversy and organised efforts to limit the Church's comprehensiveness.

Secondly, we may ask, if votes of ecclesiastical censure are passed by the Upper Houses, and the statement endorsed that the opinions expressed at the Cambridge Conference 'are contrary to the teaching of the Bible and the Church,' will this give strength and weight to the Traditional views, either in the minds of Traditionalists themselves or in the minds of Churchmen generally? Traditionalists do not stand in need of any such establishment in their form of the Faith, and those who are not Traditionalists would not be influenced in their judgment, though they might be in their conduct, by such a vote of censure. Such an ecclesiastical censure might reduce the more timid of them to silence and condemn

them henceforth to teach the Faith in conventional terms. Such a result would only serve to decrease the confidence of the average Englishman either in the sincerity or in the intelligence of the clergy. The perusal of Mr. Emmet's little book, *Conscience, Creeds and Critics*, is not calculated to promote confidence in the infallibility of Convocation in these matters, nor in the results which have followed from their utterances in response to similar Petitions and Complaints.

Thirdly, what has happened since the Cambridge Conference indicates both the large support in Church circles for that policy of free and reverent discussions of theological difficulties which took place at Cambridge, and also the need for a thorough organization of such support. Liberal Churchmen do not believe in party organization, they despise machinery, and detest bureaucracy. Nevertheless, ideas and ideals do need institutions and organizations if they are to survive organized efforts to silence and suppress them. The time has come when, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the Church and nation, liberally-minded Churchmen must make a really serious effort to develop their organization both for defence and propaganda, on the clear understanding that when, a few years hence, its task is done and the Church of England has definitely adopted a thoroughly comprehensive and progressive policy as of the very nature of its *raison d'être*, the machinery created will be ruthlessly 'scrapped.'

### The Protest of the Octogenarians.

A poet, who was something of an entomologist, describes in familiar lines the action of the law of compensation in Nature :

> Larger fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em,
> And little fleas have lesser fleas, and so *ad infinitum*.

An example of this law is seen in the attack now being made by the extreme Evangelicals upon the Anglo-Catholics while the latter are engaged in attacking the Modernists.

There is humour and justice in the situation created by this attack. Just at the moment when the Anglo-Catholics are engaged in attacking Modernists for having departed from the traditional position, the hoary fathers of Evangelicalism, who preserve for us the spirit and outlook of pre-Tractarian

Churchmanship, fall vigorously upon the Anglo-Catholic rear. The *Record*, an organ which three generations ago took a prominent part in the denunciation of Robertson of Brighton and Frederick Denison Maurice, and which, as its more recent editorials show, is still loyal to its tradition of persecuting the prophets, publishes the text of a Solemn Public Protest intended for presentation to the Archbishops and Bishops. The best known signatories to the Protest are Sir Edward Clarke and Dean Wace :—

> 'We beg to raise a solemn public protest against the violation of law and neglect of moral obligations which are now allowed to prevail among many of the clergy of the Church of England.
>
> 'Solemn pledges given at ordination are to a large extent disregarded. Clergy who have declared before God and man that they unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are proclaiming that the four Gospels contain elements of legend respecting the birth, life, and resurrection of our Lord; and, ignoring all but negative criticism, they treat the narratives of the Pentateuch as unhistorical, and the testimony to them in the Psalms and the New Testament as unreliable. Professors in Holy Orders and other dignitaries openly avow opinions respecting our Lord's nature which are admittedly inconsistent with the received creeds of the Church. The strict promises required at ordination as regards the observance of the Book of Common Prayer are treated by many as having little or no binding force. In the order of the Holy Communion this abuse is flagrant. Vestments, ornaments, ceremonies, and even prayers, are introduced which were rejected by our Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and which avowedly reinstate the doctrine and ceremonial of the Roman Church. A systematic discipline of private confession, as a condition precedent to Absolution and Communion, is openly and insistently imposed; and, in the words of the Royal Commission, many practices which "lie on the Romeward side of a line of deep cleavage between the Church of England and that of Rome" are widely prevalent. The result is that, in any parish in our country, parishioners may find themselves under a ministry of a rationalizing or Romanizing character, and are without a remedy, because the Bishops will neither allow them to appeal to the law nor take action themselves.
>
> 'Thus the whole basis of the Church of England as established by law is being undermined, and in this unjust and injurious state of things we have no resource but to make this protest. We desire only the observance of the doctrine and worship prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer and the Articles of the Church of England, which are formally acknowledged by all clergy to be agreeable to the Word of God; and we appeal to the authorities of the Church to maintain the rights of members of the Reformed Church of England in their most sacred interests.'

Four-fifths of this protest condemns Anglo-Catholic teaching and practice, for the acceptance of critical methods in the

study of Holy Scripture is as freely admitted by them as by Modernists, although they do not, it is true, carry the application of those methods so far, nor do they extend them from the sphere of Scripture into the spheres of Church History and Church Doctrine. Most of them are satisfied with teaching the *Old* Testament in a way that would have horrified the Catholic Fathers and Doctors of the Church, but are loathe to proceed further. Nevertheless, they do accept the critical method of Biblical study domesticated in the Anglo-Catholic party by the *Lux Mundi* school, which is bound to lead, as Canon Liddon foresaw, to an ultimate departure from Catholic tradition, however long that departure may be concealed or postponed.

Modern Churchmen regret that the signatories of this protest, and those whom they represent (and let it be clearly understood that they represent only a fragment of the Evangelical school) should feel that those who accept with caution and reverence the assured results of Biblical Criticism deserve to be condemned as disregarding 'solemn pledges.' What however are modern minded clergymen to do? The present position of such is not due to their cultivating in themselves 'an evil heart of unbelief,' but rather to a painstaking and, in some cases, self-denying effort to keep the Priest's Ordination Vow 'to be diligent in reading of the Holy Scriptures and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same.'

If the Church of England ought to stand still in its doctrine, then this extreme Protest is just, but no Christian can really believe that, who also believes that there is a Divine Spirit of Truth whose function it is to guide the Christian Church into all Truth. It also seems to us that the re-introduction into the English Church of mediaeval practices and doctrines which were definitely and decisively rejected at the Reformation stands on a very different footing from the teaching of truth in new forms, as required by those studies in history, psychology, and natural science, which are the product of a new age.

Moreover, their appeal to the tradition of the Reformation does not seem to us to differ in principle from that of the mediaevalists whom they condemn. The appeal to the authority

of the sixth century is at least as respectable as the appeal to the authority of the sixteenth. Where, however, Sir Edward Clarke and Dean Wace have right on their side as against the Anglo-Catholics is that the latter are pledged to the support of a Church system which delivers them from the tyranny of ecclesiastical tradition, and makes the Bible the basis of English Church authority. Modern Churchmen are really carrying forward the policy of the Reformation. They acknowledge the authority of Scripture, but Scripture as interpreted by the mind of the twentieth century, not by that of the sixteenth.

### A Scottish Bishop and English Modernism.

The Bishop of Edinburgh's Charge, delivered on February 7th* contains a severe criticism of the Cambridge Conference, or perhaps more correctly a severe condemnation, for the Bishop's utterance is that of a preacher rather than that of a scholar and critic.

We deplore the Bishop's intervention and are sorry to find him in opposition, but we are inclined to believe that pressure exerted by the Duke of Argyll and the Scottish members of the E.C.U. is really responsible for his action. Celtic Christianity has always shown a tendency to make its bishops subservient to its chiefs.

In three pages it is not possible to traverse a controversial statement of thirty-four pages, nor is it necessary to do so on the present occasion, as Dr. Rashdall may be expected to answer it, at least inclusively, when dealing in our next issue with some forms of current traditional theology which are not so orthodox as their adherents are disposed to believe.

The Bishop begins by contrasting Modernism and Traditionalism. The contrast will not strike the Modernist as a just one. For instance, Christ is claimed as 'the great Traditionalist.' If we must use labels in such a case, we should have thought He could be much more truly claimed as 'the great Modernist.' Those who heard Him at the outset of His ministry said: 'What is this? A new teaching.' Christ it was who

* *The Duty of the Church respecting the Recent Attacks made on the Christian Faith.* Published by R. Grant & Son, Edinburgh. 1/-.

uttered the *dictum*: 'It was said by them of old time, but I say unto you . . .' The authentic note of Modernism is dominant in the teaching of Christ, as in that of St. Stephen and St. Paul, and in the eighth century prophets; and it was for their Modernism that they were persecuted.

Modernism, says Dr. Walpole, has always been 'divisive,' causing separations among Christians, whereas 'Traditionalism is the great Uniter.'

There is truth and falsehood in this. If Traditionalism stands for Creation, Salvation and Stagnation, and if Modernism stands for Creation, Salvation and Education, division is bound to arise. But as 'the ever-memorable Mr. John Hales' pointed out: 'He is the schismatic who causes the schism, not he who is separated by it.' If progress be an authentic mark of the Christian Religion, because its authority is not that of a book or of a system but of a spirit—the Spirit of Truth which is ever striving to lead Christians into all truth—then those who insist on standing still when they ought to be advancing, and become in consequence of their delay separated from their advancing brethren, are the real schismatics. In the first century, who were the schismatics from the Israel of God? The Jews or the Christians? The Bishop is bound to reply, 'The Christians,' and so condemn the Jewish Traditionalists from whom they parted. And if Jewish Traditionalism be condemned, Christian Traditionalism must incur a much severer condemnation.

Dr. Walpole cites Bishop Westcott as saying, 'Our Creeds rule us.' It would be hard to find a citation from Westcott which is more untrue to the general tenour of his teaching, if by the phrase is meant, as Dr. Walpole means, that Christians are ruled by an ancient formulary. We know, however, that Dr. Westcott meant nothing of the sort, and would rise in protest at such a misapplication of his words. Westcott may have been hazy, he may not have been always consistent, but he was never a literalist or a traditionalist. For him the spiritual presence of Christ and the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, and not any form of words, was the supreme authority in the Christian life.

Bishop Walpole asserts that Christ 'always threw His

hearers back on the word of God . . . and . . . repeated the Jewish Creed as being the one unalterable standard of the Faith.' By what right then does any member of the Christian hierarchy presume to substitute other creeds for the creed of Christ, and demand in menacing tones the expulsion from the Christian ministry of those Modernists who affirm that creed with all their heart and mind and soul and strength? The Modernist would be glad to have the privilege of using alternative creeds drawn from Holy Scripture, and most of all 'the Creed of Christ,' 'the one unalterable standard of the Faith,' but this request is 'turned down' as disloyal and ridiculous by his traditionalist opponents.

The Bishop writes:

> 'Personally I have no faith in Trials for Heresy, and so long as the Church of England is connected with the State such a process would do more harm than good.'

We ought perhaps as Modernists to be grateful for this statement, but we fear that it only means that if the Church were disestablished, or the right of appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council abolished, we should have a short shrift.

The Bishop concludes by affirming that 'Corporate action is what is wanted.' May we suggest that what is really wanted is co-education? The *consensus fidelium* will be better able to settle what is orthodoxy some years hence, when the Christian knowledge of science and history is fuller and truer than to-day. What is imperative at present is that we should all learn to live together and to learn together in the unity of the one body. As for conflicting doctrines—and it is doubtful how far they do conflict—is it not better to treat them in accordance with Christ's principle: 'Let both grow together until the harvest'? What our national life needs so greatly at present is a really comprehensive Church of England. When we have got that, we can, if we have the mind to, engage our energies on examining into the orthodoxy of its members, rather than on evangelising the British Empire and the world. Meanwhile such heretical inquisitions are better postponed.

We observe that Canon Goudge in the January *Church Quarterly* is of opinion that it is possible to deal with Modernists either by 'the way of ecclesiastical discipline' or by 'the way

of argument,' and urges the episcopate not to adopt the former method, for, as he truly remarks, 'when discipline comes in at the door, argument flies out at the window.' Even 'the way of argument' is not very helpful. Positive teaching by both parties is better, and the *anima humana naturaliter Christiana* will give the final verdict.

A few years hence we should not be surprised if Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics come to recognize English Modernism as their best friend, because it has helped them to be reconciled to each other, and has helped the Church to become reconciled to her alienated children. Little harm can be done by the Church authorities adopting, if not a sympathetic, at least a waiting, policy—and we have sufficient faith in the wisdom of the English episcopate to believe that they will interpret 'the duty of the Church' otherwise than does the Bishop of Edinburgh.

### A Proposal to end Controversy.

It is a relief to turn from these controversial manifestoes to a remarkable Memorial, signed by nine bishops (Oxford, Bristol, Chelmsford, Chester, Hereford, Lichfield, Manchester, Peterborough, and St. Albans), and eighteen others (including Canons Glazebrook, H. A. Wilson, and the Revs. C. E. Raven and C. J. Shebbeare), presented to the Primate suggesting the appointment of a Commission to seek for a basis of doctrinal agreement within the Church of England. The memorialists state that—

'It is becoming increasingly clear that the methods of controversy traditional in ecclesiastical matters show no prospect of yielding any fruitful results. They rather tend to perpetuate the existence of hostility and suspicion, and to divert to the sphere of controversy energies which should be devoted to the edification of the faithful and to the conversion of unbelievers both at home and abroad. Moreover, the perpetuation of controversy weakens the loyalty of individuals and their sense of obligation to the Church of which they are members, and it renders the Church as a whole powerless to give her proper witness in the political and social difficulties of the present time. Consequently many men of all parties are growing weary of disputes and are anxious to find a basis of agreement with other elements in the English Church. In view of the great efforts that are being made to secure reunion with other Christian bodies it seems only reasonable that such efforts should find their necessary complement within the Church of England; indeed, reunion without a more real unity among ourselves will at best only increase the existing confusion.

'We do not disguise from ourselves the possibilities that the attempt to find a basis of doctrinal agreement might reveal the existence of differences of so irremovable a character as to render impossible anything but a purely artificial and external unity based on the fact of the Establishment rather than on agreement in belief. There are, indeed, critics of the Church of England who say that, in fact, our differences are fundamental. We believe, however, agreement might be reached both on the essentials of the Christian faith and on the more important of those points of controversy which have bitterly divided us in the past. We believe that an inquiry animated by nothing but the desire to arrive at the truth would ultimately reveal that the matters on which agreement was impossible were those on which differences of opinion are obviously legitimate and even, within certain limits, desirable. Possibly some few, as the result of such an agreement, might secede voluntarily to other bodies, though our whole purpose is not to promote but to preclude secession.

'But it is becoming increasingly clear that the only adequate safeguard against far more serious disruption lies not in the fact of the Establishment, but in securing a genuine unity of belief. We are convinced that, in spite of her failings, the Church of England stands for a certain vital aspect of Christianity, and that it should prove possible for the vast majority of her members to agree upon an unambiguous statement of her doctrines, to which they could give general adherence. On the other hand, we desire to make clear that we would wish such a statement to be regarded not as a new test, but as an expression of the Church's official teaching.'

The memorialists then proceed to review certain serious difficulties, which, though they militate against success, yet invite endeavour, and conclude by making suggestions as to the choice of men to serve on the proposed commission. They urge that:

'(1) They must be thoroughly representative of all those parties in the Church, however extreme in whatever direction, which are willing to seek a basis of agreement; (2) they must be men of wide sympathies and tolerant temper, who will be able and anxious to understand each other's position; (3) they must be men of constructive minds; men may have all the qualities mentioned above and yet lack the imaginative power to create a synthesis; (4) in order that continuity of work and thought may be secured, a large proportion of them should be comparatively young men, say, under forty-five.'

The Primate in his reply stated that the Memorial deserved 'something more than respectful attention,' but added:

'I do not see my way to doing exactly what your letter asks. I am profoundly conscious of the truth of your contention as to the confusion, the harmfulness, and the probable needlessness of a great deal of present-day controversy within the Church. The second paragraph of your letter has my full concurrence. I believe accordingly that endeavours may usefully be made to obtain by conferences "a basis of doctrinal agreement on matters which are the subject of controversy between different sections of the Church of England."

'My difficulty arises when you go on to advocate the procedure which, in your judgment, might now be usefully adopted. You ask me to appoint a Commission consisting in large proportion of comparatively young men "thoroughly representative of all those parties in the Church, however extreme in whatever direction, which are willing to seek a basis of agreement," in order that, with a view to "securing a genuine unity of belief," they may draw up "an unambiguous statement of the doctrines of the Church of England to which they could give general adherence"; this statement "to be regarded . . . as an expression of the Church's official teaching."

'The gravity and the far-reaching character of this proposal are such as to make me wonder whether it does not say more than you actually mean. If it were laid upon me to appoint, with such instruction or reference, a Commission to be "solemnly commended by authority to the prayers of the Church" for a task which, in your judgment, would certainly occupy several years, I honestly confess that I do not know to what body of picked men, a large proportion of them under forty-five years of age, I could properly assign it, or what character or authority would belong to such "expression of the Church's official teaching" when ultimately produced.

'I should like to have a clear indication of the sort of questions, theological, ecclesiastical, or practical, to which you think such a Commission might find useful answer, and in what sort of shape you suggest that such answer should be formulated. I should also like to have some indication as to the number of men, roughly speaking, whom you have in mind for the constitution of such a Commission, and as to its relation, if any, to the existing Synodical and Constitutional bodies of the Church of England. It may possibly be my own fault, but I feel that I should be very much better able to answer or deal with the request if you could thus elucidate your letter.

'Does it seem that I am replying to you unsympathetically or coldly? I think you know me well enough to be assured that nothing is further from my thought. With my whole heart do I desire and pray for a closer fellowship in thought and prayer and action among the different sections of our Church. I deem it a privilege as well as a duty to promote such fellowship, and I share, deliberately and confidently, your belief that conference, even among those who seem widely sundered, may produce surprising results in revealing a larger unity and a closer sympathy in sacred things than either the controversialists or their critics had dreamed of. What were known as the Fulham Conferences of 1900 and 1901, inaugurated by Bishop Creighton, as well as many similar and subsequent gatherings, give ground for this firm hope.

'Therefore I do most warmly encourage you to persevere in your endeavour, perhaps restating the proposal, if you see your way thereto, in rather different terms. You will find me more than ready to welcome for consideration what you may put before me. I have already called attention to your phrase that the Commission you desire to see appointed should be thoroughly representative of "all those parties in the Church, however extreme in whatever direction, which are willing to seek a basis of agreement." That, as things now are, that endeavour has its element of peril you will be the first to realise. The names of those who have signed your letter give a guarantee of earnestness, capacity, and devotion of every kind, and it is with an earnest prayer that the plan which you have propounded for consideration may under Him Whose leadership has been promised to guide us into all the truth be so developed as to prove eminently helpful in

a time of many perplexities, of frequent anxieties, but above all of abounding opportunity and good will.'

This memorial seems to promise much. It is clear that the present controversial temper in the Church is becoming intolerable to responsible Churchmen. The only remedies are either (1) to agree to differ without recrimination and controversy or (2) to secure a basis of agreement. The first remedy would be typically English, but we doubt whether it is realisable at present. The second remedy requires the drawing up of a short, simple, scriptural confession of faith, unambiguous, comprehensive, practical.

We believe it would be found quite possible to do this, and we do not think it would take very long to do. We believe, moreover, that a *modus vivendi et operandi* could be also reached on many other points were the protagonists to meet face to face, not simply for theological discussion, but for prayer and social intercourse. Churchmen get into historical, ecclesiastical, logical, and even mechanical relations with each other, but not human and Christian relations, and then mutual understanding and agreement become impossible—but personal intercourse might do an astonishing amount to abolish this anti-Christian situation.

We note with thankfulness that the *Guardian* viewed the proposal very favourably and felt sure that

> 'The last has not been heard of a proposal which will be welcomed by the great majority of Church-people, whatever their ecclesiastical complexion.'

The *Church Times* was much less favourable, and declared

> 'The more we study the document the more doubtful we become. . . . At present we do not like the suggestion. It is not enough to be well-meaning. Let us be careful that we do not fashion a new rod for Anglican backs.'

The editor of the *Challenge* wrote :—

> 'For ourselves we so deeply resent being forced to accept propositions intellectually untenable and to imperil our honesty by all sorts of reservations and sophistries, that we should welcome any, or almost any, conceivable change. The Memorial, at least, confesses that there has been change, and that there is need of restatement; and it calls us to support an effort in that direction. Granted that there are dangers in the venture, granted that the Archbishop is wise to be cautious and to ask for further particulars, we are convinced that the

proposal is worthy of support, and shall regard it as a misfortune if it is wholly abandoned.'

We note that the editor of the *Challenge* comments on 'the general absence of Liberals from the list of signatories' as indicating that they decline as a body 'to associate themselves with the proposed scheme.' We believe this is not at all the case. If a number of well-known Liberal signatories are absent from the list, we may assume that it was because they were not invited to sign. We have no idea who arranged the matter, but have little doubt that a balance in the Church parties represented by the signatories was aimed at, rather than a large number of signatures. We do not doubt that the great body of Liberal or Modern Churchmen are in favour of the proposal of the memorialists.

In connection with the Memorial to the Archbishop, it is important to note that at the recent annual conference of Principals of Theological Colleges, held this year at Canterbury, the following resolution was passed:

'Whereas the Thirty-nine Articles in many particulars reflect the thought and problems of an age different from the present, and are the occasion of serious difficulties to some who contemplate Holy Orders, this conference of Principals of theological colleges would welcome the establishment of a considered inquiry into the formulation of the doctrine of the Church of England.'

## The Ever-Widening Gap.

Lord Dawson of Penn, in the foreword to his wise and courageous paper* delivered at the Birmingham Church Congress, writes:—

'The attitude of the Church towards the problem of sexual relationships is part of a larger question, *viz.* the ever-widening gap between the formal teaching of the Church and the actual belief of the present generation, including many who by baptism and early training belong to her fold.

'The gap between authority and actuality of belief imposes a strain on intellectual integrity and weakens the foundations of a real allegiance . . . Youth is no longer willing to accept forms and formulae only on account of their age. So it has set out on a voyage of inquiry, and finding some things which are doubtful and others which are insufficient, is searching for forms of expression more in harmony with the realities of life and knowledge. Although becoming estranged from the Church, it is possessed of deep religious feel-

* *Love—Marriage—Birth Control,* by Lord Dawson of Penn. Published by Nisbet & Co. Price, 1/- net.

ing and, firm on the rock foundation of faith, is trying to build a superstructure more in accord with the progress of revelation, not only in religion, but in science, and the needs of the world in which it moves and has its being.'

Lord Dawson concludes his paper with the appeal :—

'May I end my speech with an appeal that the Church approaches this question, in the light of modern knowledge and the needs of a new world, and unhampered by traditions which have outworn their usefulness.'

Lord Dawson's appeal, not only in this particular matter, but in a great number of other cases, is voiced by a large number of Englishmen. Not, we believe, an increasing number, because many who used to look to the Church for guidance have ceased to look in that direction. The *Methodist Recorder*, in its leading article of January 19, agrees with Lord Dawson's statement about the ever-widening gap between Church teaching and general belief, and remarks that

'The seriousness of the separation lies in the fact that most men are not radical unbelievers—only unbelievers in organized religion, 'the formal teaching of the Church.' The discarding is not only theological—it goes on and discards Church practice.'

If we could feel sure that the ever-widening gap is due to the Church standing strongly and unflinchingly for Christ's principles and to the majority of Englishmen turning more and more away from those principles, then as humanitarians we might well feel depressed, but we should not be disconcerted. Christ said : 'Narrow is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' To be a true Christian can never be as easy as to be a sensualist and a worldling, and we have no desire that the Church should betray Christ's principles and vulgarise His Gospel. But as we study the situation it seems to us that cowardice and conservatism rather than courage and conscientiousness are the cause of the present situation. That is certainly Lord Dawson's view, as it is the view of many. He writes :—

'The world looks to its leaders for reasoned guidance, not for assertions which may be but the husk of a thought that has gone.'

Unfortunately political methods and political axioms have too much weight in Church policy, and the numerous and

noisy carry the day. Our Methodist contemporary seems to share this view :—

> 'Opportunism—we have had enough of it in politics at any rate! But we ought to be ashamed of that policy in the Church. Opportunism, as Lord Dawson says, helps in situations which are small, but never in those which are large.'

Certainly, as a religious corporation, we have not prospered much of late years. We need the courage to return to the great simplicities of the Gospel, and to be willing to scrap all else. If we did the gap would not grow wider, and at least we should then have all the right men on the right side of the gap instead of so many of the right men on the wrong side of it.

### What is Faith in the Deity of Christ?

The January *Interpreter* contains a thoughtful article on the ethical meaning of faith in the deity of Christ, by the Rev. C. F. Russell, who has just been elected Hulsean Lecturer. Intellectual assent to a proposition seems to Mr. Russell to have little value in comparison with ethical allegiance to a person or an ideal. There is, he is sure, an orthodox belief in the Deity of Christ which is barren and cold. Such orthodoxy has no value in Mr. Russell's eyes. For him faith in the Incarnation is an acknowledgment that love—such love as the life of Jesus exhibited—is the essence of the nature of God. In making this acknowledgment he gives his assent to the absolute demand that love makes upon his own obedience. In an eloquent passage he asks :—

> 'Who is it that believes to-day in the Divinity of Christ? Is it not the man whose whole soul goes out in unreserving acceptance of the supremacy of love? Such a definition would include many who do not assume the name of Christian; many who, because they stumble at the creeds, would feel, and might even be told, that they had no place at a Christian eucharist; many who within the last few years have fought and died for an ideal, for the love of country, for the love of comrades, and yet have stood resolutely outside the churches. Can we doubt that such men acknowledge the Divinity of Christ in the only way in which He would Himself wish such acknowledgment to be made the test of discipleship? The majesty of love has them in thrall.
>
> 'There is a negative side to our conclusion as well. However loudly and clearly a man may recite the creed, he does not really believe this great doctrine of the faith if he does not consciously accept the supremacy of love, whether as revealing the nature of God or as constituting the ideal and principle of true human life. The man who honestly thinks that in the last resort force is mightier than love, whether it be in the affairs of individual men or of nations,

> does not believe in the Divinity of Christ. The man who deliberately values wealth above opportunity of service, whether for himself or for his friends, does not believe in the Divinity of Christ. In a word, we deny that He is Divine whenever we set anything save love on the throne of the universe or of the individual heart.'

The practical question is not, How did God become man? nor is it, Is Jesus Christ God? It is, What is God like? For the Christian, Jesus Christ is the answer to that question. Here both Traditionalists and Modernists are in absolute agreement. Is not that enough? St. Philip is recorded to have said, 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' And Christ replied, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' Why should the Traditionalist demand more from the Modernist than sufficed an Apostle?'

### Judaizing the Argument.

The *Churchman*, the oldest American Church newspaper, in its issue of February 4th, contains a significant article entitled 'Judaizing the Argument.' The writer laments that

> 'One of the tragic wastes of the religious life has been the spiritual energy expended by Christians in trying to make their beliefs and teachings square with ancient explanations and symbolism.'

He asserts that there is nothing inherently unreasonable in the doctrine of the Atonement, the Trinity, the Sacraments, and that the laity wish to believe in a just God, a Christ Who is a Saviour, and Sacraments that are ethical, but that too often the explanations of the doctors of the Church render this difficult.

These difficulties the writer accounts for by the fact that Christ's Gospel has come to us through Judaism and Greek philosophy, and he wishes that it could come to us straight from Christ Himself. But he also recognises that this presentation of the Gospel in the terminology of the Jewish synagogue is no recent phenomenon, but goes back at least to St. Paul. He writes :

> 'Take, for example, to follow up the argument, the epistle which continues to be read in the Episcopal Church on the first Sunday of the New Year from the fourth chapter of *Romans*. In that epistle, which is probably read to the largest congregations of the year except that of Easter Day, the word "circumcision" occurs twelve times in twenty-four lines. No modern Christian desires to talk about circumcision in public in reference to his religious life. It doesn't mean anything to him, but to the Jews it did. It was intended for them; it was not intended for us. Those twenty-four lines are not

> only absolutely thrown away on a modern congregation, they are offensive to them if they think about them at all. Their only value is that hypnotic one which comes from the repitition of a long word. There are better long words than "circumcision" for the purposes of devotion. In many of our churches, we are glad to note that the rectors are substituting the reading which will probably be permitted in the revised Prayer Book. But the fact that the passage still stands in our Prayer Book and that ten thousand times ten thousand Christians of forty generations and more, to whom the word "circumcision" has had no symbolic meaning, who are not Jews, have been dragged through this unseemly symbolism merely because it had a meaning to the men Paul was trying to convert to Christianity, is appalling to common sense. We dwell upon this because it is typical of what we are constantly doing to make our simple, beautiful, understandable Christian doctrine difficult.'

He then asks the pertinent question:

> 'If there is a straight path to Christ for Americans in the twentieth century—and who can doubt that there is?—why trace a tortuous curve from Abraham through all the intellectual struggles of the Fathers, down to the difficulties of John Smith, who wants to be confirmed? John has rights of his own. He should be argued with on his own ground, with his background and aptitudes, just as were the Jewish converts with whom Paul took such meticulous care. Paul followed the sensible, pedagogical method; he traced a straight line from Judaism to Christ for the Jews. The apostle in dealing with the Greeks used the same method. If Paul were living to-day would he think of leading John Smith through the Jewish temple before bringing him to the Table of our Lord? From what we know of his methods, we dare to assert that he would not.'

But until it be really recognised quite definitely that Christ, and not Jewish lawgivers nor even New Testament Apostles, is the supreme authority for Christians there is little hope of having the Christian Religion presented in a form which is entirely Christian.

This going back to Jesus Christ as our supreme authority is not nearly so easy a matter as is supposed. Many a Christian doing that to-day would be regarded as heretical by our theologians, for to hold the doctrine of God which our Lord held; to hold the doctrine of the Atonement which He taught; to confine our doctrine of the Christ to His teaching about Himself; would seem to many who attach such weight to later theological and ecclesiastical developments to be actual heresy, or if not heresy, at least 'a reduced Christianity.' The question is a serious one: it must be answered, and better sooner than later. We are glad that our American contemporary has raised it.

# INSTITUTIONAL SELFISHNESS

By Principal L. P. Jacks, M.A., D.D., LL.D., Editor of *The Hibbert Journal.*

THE particular institutions of whose selfishness I am about to treat are the Christian Churches. No doubt the title so understood will appear somewhat harsh. But perhaps its harshness will be softened if I explain what first suggested it to my mind.

There came to me some time ago a circular from one of the many societies which have been founded for promoting the cause of international peace and good will. This circular was addressed to ministers of all the Christian Churches, and it laid down certain principles, all of them excellent, which it urged these various Churches to unite in pressing upon public opinion and upon governments. Among these principles one of the chief was the duty of each nation to make some sacrifice of its individual interest for the common interest of them all, and, if I remember rightly, the circular went on to say that the international problem would remain insoluble until the principle of self-renunciation was adopted all round—an eminently true remark. When I read that a question suddenly occurred to my mind. 'When,' I asked myself, 'have these Christian Churches, which are now asked to unite in urging the principle of self-renunciation upon the governments of the earth, ever shown the slighest disposition to practice that principle *in their relations with one another*? When has any one of the Churches or sects to which this circular has been sent, shown itself willing to make sacrifice of its own interests for the common good of all the Churches or sects'? I could not think of a single instance. So I refused to sign the manifesto.

Later on I received another circular, from another Society, proposing a League of the Churches, an idea evidently suggested by the League of Nations. In this circular not a word was said about self-renunciation. On the contrary a scheme was outlined, the express object of which was to enable each of the Churches to combine with the others without any sacrifice

whatever of the power, the influence, the property, and the beliefs which were peculiarly its own. The principle of the scheme was indeed that very doctrine of 'the balance of power' which the first circular had asked the Churches to repudiate in favour of the principle of international self-renunciation. This second circular also I refused to sign. It was in connexion with these two circulars that the words 'institutional selfishness' first occurred to my mind as applicable to the Christian Churches of to-day.

It seems to me that, on the ground of their relations with one another, the Christian Churches do not offer the world an example of lofty morality. The morality they display in those relations is at the best of a middling order. At that point they show a remarkable lack of any virtue that might fairly be called heroic, as self-renunciation undoubtedly is; and to this extent they are in a most unfortunate position for urging these virtues on the secular institutions of mankind, on governments, nations, and states. They are in the position of never having practised those virtues themselves under like conditions. Such phrases as 'the good of all is the good of each,' 'the misfortune of one is the misfortune of all' do not illustrate their normal attitude to one another, but condemn it. Their attitude seldom rises beyond the level of passive toleration. Of active co-operation for the purpose of helping one another, there is, so far as I can see, none. When they co-operate it is for the purpose of promoting something external to them all, like temperance or housing, but they never co-operate for helping each other forward as Churches. I speak as one who belongs to a rather despised sect, and perhaps I betray the prejudice of that position. Certainly I cannot recall a single action on the part of the other Churches which has been designed for the purpose of helping forward the Church to which I belong. Some of you perhaps may present a better record, but I doubt if it will be very much better. The Churches do not play the part of Good Samaritan to one another. If they no longer attack one another and provoke religious wars to make good their claims, they still remain essentially self-assertive and unsympathetic in their corporate characters. Am I wrong in suggesting that just as the principle

of self-renunciation all round is the only principle on which the nations of the world can unite into a corporate fraternity, so too it is the principle of any effective union of the Churches? Before such a union could be brought into being one or other of the Churches might even be required to consent to being wiped out for the glory of God. For my part I see no trace of such a disposition anywhere.

Indeed the more we consider the international situation the more analogies does it present to the inter-church situation. International morality and institutional morality appear to be pretty much on the same level, and the level is not high. At least, the two things have much in common, originating in the same source and developing thence the same habits of mind and the same type of illusion. Just as every Briton believes that the fortunes of civilization depend on the maintenance of the British Empire, though no foreigner admits it for a moment, and just as every Frenchman and German has a similar belief about his own nation, so we of the Churches are always tending in practice, if not in theory, to identify the fortunes of religion with those of our own party or sect. None of us can quite conceive of religion prospering if our sect died out. When St. Francis de Sales was reproached by a friend for endangering his life by the severity of his labours, his reply was 'it is not necessary that I should live, but it is necessary that God's work should go on,' and I suppose that many a soldier in the late war said the same thing about England before going over the top. But if you look for that spirit in great institutions you find as little of it in the corporate life of Churches as in the corporate life of states. In the one field as in the other you see the strife as to who shall be greatest, the struggle for power, in the one for power over the bodies of men, in the other for power over their souls, pursued indeed by different methods, but betraying similar motives and leading to the same type of unhappy and unbeautiful relationships between the competing units. In both fields you see the entanglement of lower motives with higher, in which the lower motives are always tending to get the upper hand, and often actually doing so. In both you see how the higher motives are invariably brought forward as excuses for the wrongs perpe-

trated by the lower. Thus in international affairs direct acts of spoliation and robbery, which originate in robbers' motives, are constantly exhibited under the garb of patriotism or a just interest in the good of civilization. On the other side the jealousy of the Churches in guarding their vested interests, their power, their prestige, is easily excused as due to a loving concern for the salvation of souls. In both again we may observe how the secondary interests of the machine gradually tend to become identified with the primary interests the machine was intended to serve. Men constantly believe that they are serving the greater thing when in truth they are only serving the lesser—'strengthening the position of the Church,' as it is called, and fully persuaded that whatever does that is of God. The consequence of all this is manifest enough. In their relations with one another the states of the world are content with a level of morality which is far below that of a decent member of any state, and indeed the negation of it. So too the level of interdenominational morality—if morality is the right word—is far below that of any of the denominations. Looking at their relations with one another as institutions, the outstanding feature of all of them is something that would be called selfishness if it existed between individuals. Men have noted it—indeed they can hardly overlook it. This does not help the Churches to make effective headway in their proper business.

I am not unacquainted with the argument which defends institutions as necessary to religion. Taken in the abstract form this argument appears to me quite unanswerable. But like most unanswerable arguments its value depends on the applications that are made of it. This one has proved itself singularly susceptible of misapplication. Because institutions are necessary it does not follow that you must have as many as possible, and that any kind will do. It does not follow that the institutions should absorb the energy needed for the religion they embody, nor that policy should take the place of zeal. It may be that the value of institutions to religion depends on having as few as possible, and on keeping them as inconspicuous as possible. Obviously it depends on having them of the right kind.

On the whole I believe that Christianity has been unfortunate in the institutions it has created. They have been of a kind which has obscured the essentials and led to an enormous waste of energy on secondary objects. One of my chief heresies, if you will allow me to confess it, lies in a feeling, I might almost say, a settled conviction, that the genius of Christianity is not at home in the Church or Chapel atmosphere as it exists to-day. I greatly doubt if the Churches and Chapels, whether you take them singly or whether you take them *en masse*, are good representatives of the Christian genius. Observe that I am speaking of the institutions, not of the individuals who compose them. Among individuals good representatives of Christianity are to be found impartially in all the Churches, though I must add that some of the best Christians[1] I have known belong to neither Church nor Chapel, and never enter the doors of either.

The original mistake was made when Christianity borrowed the type of its institutions from the kingdoms that are of this world, the political kingdoms, with which in an evil hour it was persuaded to enter into a most unnatural alliance. To Christianity was given the model of a heavenly city, but instead of bringing that city down to earth, it took the earthly model for its basis, and so built the Tower of Babel once more. In consequence of its alliance with political institutions, the institutional life of Christianity became involved in the fatal struggle for power, which has been the bane of mankind, and which its mission was to supersede. Instead of transcending the ethics which are proper to the struggle for power, it unconsciously adopted them, and gave them a new sanction and a wider currency. Its creeds became entangled with its vested interests, so that, at the present moment, it is almost impossible to disentangle them. The very conception of God itself took on a political form, God being conceived as the cosmic potentate, ruling the universe after the Prussian model, under a system of iron law, and punishing mutineers with death, the

[1] I mean Christians in the sense that they lived Christ-like lives. I am aware, of course, that many great authorities would not allow them to be Christians if that was all that could be said for them.

very opposite of what Christianity means when it says that 'God is Spirit' and that 'God is Love.' In a word, the type of institution built up, reflecting as it did the main features of an order Christianity was intended to supersede, was by its very nature provocative of strife. At the very least it required an enormous expenditure of energy in subsequent self defence against other institutions similarly constituted. The Churches became involved in the defence of interests and positions, in the pursuit of 'policy,' and the Gospel had to be content with the energy that was left over when 'policy' had been provided for. These are the reasons which induce me to think that Christianity has not been fortunate in the kind of institutions it has created, without prejudice to the abstract doctrine that religion needs institutions.

The ideal type of institution for a religion like Christianity would be one which was entirely indifferent to its own fortunes as an institution, and prepared at any moment to die in order to live. The distribution of its energies would be the reverse of that which now obtains. Nearly all would go into the attack upon the gloom, misery and ignorance of the world; next to nothing would go into the defence of vested interests, whether they take the form of creeds, property, power, position or prestige. The creeds would be left to stand or fall according to their success in saving men's souls; for unless they stand that test there is no other way of making them good. Everything else would be secondary to that. So far as I am aware no such type of Christian institution is at present to be found anywhere on the earth, though perhaps, as Plato would say, it exists in the heavens, and so long as it exists somewhere it does not much matter whether it exists *here* or *there*. Some approach to it, however, is found in the methods of the Salvation Army and the methods of the Quakers, the one among the most successful, the other among the least successful, movements of our time—at least outwardly. Both examples are impressive. Though neither is perfect yet either of them seems to prove that self-defensive institutionalism is no necessary part of the Christian religion.

# SOME MODERN PROBLEMS OF THE MISSION FIELD

## II. A Wider Basis for Theology.

By the Rev. R. L. Pelly, M.A., Vice-Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta.

THIS paper is written as a plea for a more generous recognition of the claims of Comparative Religion to a leading place among theological studies.

The first necessary step, if those claims are to be allowed, is the discovery of some more adequate title for the subject in question. The term 'Comparative Religion' suggests some new kind of religion, distinguished from other religions by being 'comparative' (whatever that might mean), something painfully dry and academic. 'The History of Religion' expresses much more nearly what we mean, but directs attention too much to the past and too little to the present. Perhaps the 'Science of Religion' is the most satisfactory term we can find. It is sufficiently inclusive, bearing reference to all forms of religion everywhere. And it is sufficiently honourable, for is it not as complete a translation as we can make of the word 'Theology' itself? It has, moreover, a further advantage. It suggests the fact that religion is not a haphazard, inexplicable phenomenon, but that it has its cause and origin in certain definitely ascertainable psychological facts, that it develops in obedience to definite laws, and that there are criteria by which the value of its various products can be judged. He who would understand the functions and values of religion must approach it in a scientific spirit.

There is one application of this principle which demands special notice. The scientific spirit requires that conclusions should be based upon the study of all the available facts. The rule is startlingly simple, and it is startlingly neglected. Hitherto Christian Theology has confined its attention to the facts available within the limits of the Hebrew-Christian tradition. Some, the Protestants, have based their theology on the earlier section of that tradition as contained in the Bible. Others, the Catholics, have used more the later section as seen

in the history of the Church. But few have looked beyond its limits. If we want to learn, for instance, how to pray, we study the prayers found in the Bible and those of the saints and liturgies of the historic Church. Innumerable books are written on such a basis, but they seldom contain a reference to the Penitential Psalms of ancient Assyria or the Hymns of Tuka Ram. If we wish to learn how best to govern our religious organisations, we submit the records of the New Testament and the Early Fathers to scrutiny, but we do not waste a glance on the less regulated methods of Islam or Buddhism. They are 'not Christian,' they do not concern us.

Or again, if we want to understand the position which Jesus Christ holds in human history, we examine the preparation made for Him in the providence of God. We recognize in Him the Messiah of Hebrew prophecy, the coming Prophet of the Deuteronomist, the Son of Man of Daniel and the Apocalyptists, the pre-existent Wisdom of the Wisdom Literature, and the Logos of Philo. We acknowledge in these ideas the work of the Divine Spirit, and we rejoice to use them in fashioning our own answer to the riddle of the Incarnation. But they all (with the important exception of the last) are drawn from the Hebrew tradition. In the recent Cambridge Conference there was abundant reference to these Hebrew ideas, but no mention whatever appears to have been made of similar ideas outside the Hebrew tradition—the Avatars of Hinduism, the conception of Amida Buddha in Buddhism, the shadowy figure of the coming deliverer in Plato. Are not these also the work of the Divine Spirit? Are not they also to be welcomed as God-given preparation for the preaching of Christ?

In other words, our theological studies are not yet scientific; they are not based on all the facts.

Considerations of this kind are constantly present to the mind of the modern missionary. The present writer was recently invited to give a course of lectures to a class of Non-Christian Students in a Christian College in India. The lectures were labelled 'Religious Instruction.' There seemed to be three possible courses open to me. I might, in the first place, set Christianity and Hinduism in contrast and urge the complete *superiority* of the former. Using this method, I should

be forced into the position of a hostile critic of Hinduism, and I might only succeed in alienating the sympathies of my hearers. This is the missionary method of fifty years ago, and it is now generally discarded. A second method would be to present Christianity by itself *without reference* to Hinduism. This line of approach is generally in vogue among missionaries to-day, but too often it leaves the hearer as proud as ever of his old religion. He is quite ready to acknowledge the beauties of Christ, but he firmly believes that the Hindu Scriptures and Philosophies contain treasures at least as great or greater. His knowledge of Hinduism is usually very slight, but the meagreness of his knowledge in no way detracts from the robustness of his faith. The first method had the merit that it took account of all the facts, but it suffered from a most unscientific prejudice by which everything Christian was coloured white, while everything Hindu appeared as black. The second method avoided the dangers of the first, but it, too, was unscientific, because it ignored a large section of the facts.

Accordingly I determined to try a third method, and am presenting my Christianity as the *fulfilment* of the noblest aspirations of Hinduism. I am saying that as God prepared the Hebrew people for the revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ, so also (though less completely) He has prepared the Indian races. In sundry parts and diverse manners God has spoken in times past to the Hindus by His prophets, leading them up step by step from the Polytheism of the *Rig Veda* to the philosophers' doctrine of the One Brahma, and thence on to the belief in the necessity for an incarnation of that Supreme as recognized in Rama and Krishna, an incarnation to be served not so much by 'works' (*Karma*) or 'knowledge' (*Jnana*) as by 'Devotion' (*bhakti*), a term not very remote in meaning from the 'faith' of St. Paul. Both lines of development, the Hindu as well as the Hebrew, are recognized in their varying degrees as the work of God, the result of the action of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men.

There is, of course, no need to exaggerate the value of the Revelation thus given to the Hindu. If Hinduism really was so fine a preparation for the Gospel, if it stood ready, equipped with a doctrine of Incarnation and a doctrine of Salvation by

Faith, why, it may be asked, did God send His Son to be born in Judaea and not in India? The answer is that Judaea had seen (or had been shown) a clearer vision of truth than India. Judaea had grasped firmly two great principles on which Hinduism spoke with a very wavering voice—that God is personal and that God is holy. It was this knowledge that gave to the Hebrew race the high privileges it has enjoyed. Nothing, therefore, can dethrone the Hebrew Scriptures from their primary position in the eyes of the Christian.

On the other hand, the doctrine of the Elect (the 'Chosen Nation' and 'Peculiar People') must not be so unfairly stressed as to imply that other nations have been altogether outside the scope of the divine economy. Our neglect of the religions of the East has its origin in a feeling that God's Spirit has operated only in Palestine and Europe and America, while all other lands have been left to feel their own way unaided in the dark. Such a feeling—for it can hardly be dignified by the title of a belief—is not only unscriptural, but utterly inconsistent with the Christian doctrine of God. It is incredible that the All-Father should wholly neglect many millions of His children and for thousands of years lavish attention only on the few.

If once it is acknowledged that God's Spirit was at work in the non-Christian religions, those religions assume a new dignity and a new importance for the Christian. If we would know God, we cannot afford to neglect the study of any of His works. And so the non-Christian prophets and the non-Christian Scriptures fall into their place by the side of those of the Old Testament as integral parts of Christian theology. Hitherto we have regarded the study of other religions as a side-show, a more or less interesting extra to fill up spare time. We must now see that they are organically related to the whole body of Christian doctrine in simple obedience to the principle that 'conclusions must be based on a study of all the facts.'

The position here maintained is not of course entirely new. No competent scholar will expound the Genesis doctrine of Creation without reference to Babylon, nor the Johannine Logos without reference to Stoic thought. We have really admitted the principle that God used for the purposes of His revelation materials drawn from extra-Hebraic sources. If St. John was

right in seeing in the Greek theory of the Logos a God-given thought-form through which the truth could be presented to Greeks, is it not reasonable to maintain that the ethnic religions of the East also contain God-given thought-forms of which a similar use can be made? The same universal Father who sent Moses and Isaiah sent also Plato and Gautama and Zoroaster and Tulsi Das and Tagore. Every good gift is from Him.

Again, let me defend myself from possible misunderstanding. Every *good* gift is from God, but there is much in those religions which is not at all 'good.' We must not slip into an easy Pantheism which makes God responsible for all that is. Hinduism in particular has some very ugly features. The popular cults are sometimes indescribably degrading, and even the philosophies are often hostile to the best interests both of religion and morals. There are, of course, errors to be found in the Old Testament, but they are small in comparison with those of Hinduism. Yet even in Hinduism there is abundant evidence of the operation of God drawing men towards Himself. We will not reject the gold nor deny its existence because it lies buried among much that is rubbish.

Even the rubbish has a value to the student. Just as the doctor can learn much about the operations of the human body from a study of disease, so the student of theology can learn much from what are obviously false and evil developments in religion. What is it in the constitution of the human mind that finds expression in Kali worship? Or in the foulness of the Left-handed Shaktas? Or the self-tortures of the fire-swinging Sadhus? We cannot think that these developments are God-inspired. But they are the expression—the diseased and wrong expression—of some God-given instinct, which rightly directed might lead man to the highest spiritual heights. It is the business of Theology (which is the Science of Religion) to study that instinct, to discover its real nature and the modes of expression which can most truly satisfy it. For such a study, all forms of religion are relevant, even the most pathological. We must base our conclusions on a study of all the facts.

At this point we meet a powerful ally in the shape of Religious Psychology. This is a new science and recognizes none of our traditional barriers. When William James writes on

*Varieties of Religious Experience*, he bases his study on examples drawn from all races and all regions. Similarly, Miss Underhill in *Mysticism* quotes not only from Christians, but also from Moslems and Hindus. The Science of Psychology and the Science of Religion are sisters with much in common between them. Psychology will support us when we plead for a wider basis for theology.

If these principles are accepted, large reforms will be necessary in our theological *curricula*. The study now known as Comparative Religion, which at present lingers on the doorstep, uncertain of her welcome, must be re-named the Science of Religion and conducted to the central throne. The other studies will not be dismissed, but will take their places as her satellites and subordinates, each fulfilling its proper function as part of the great quest, the greatest of all human undertakings, the search for the truth about God.*

* I venture to add a very tentative outline of suggestions for a revised curriculum for a Theological College in accordance with the principles advocated in this paper.

The subjects would be as follows :—

1. *The Nature of Religion.*—The place of the religious instinct in the human mind and the function of religion in human history and society.

2. *The Development of Religion.*—Tribal, National and Universal religions. Animism, Polytheism, Pantheism and Theism.

3. *The Five Great Religions.*—Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity.

N.B.—These first three subjects would cover the ground hitherto covered by Comparative Religion, Psychology, Old Testament History, New Testament History and Church History. It need hardly be said that I assume that in a Christian College the greater part of the available time should be devoted to the study of Christianity, but it should be approached throughout in relation to other religions, and not as an isolated phenomenon.

4. *The Languages of Religion.*—Classical Hebrew, Classical Arabic, Classical Sanskrit, Hellenistic Greek and Ecclesiastical Latin. Greek should be compulsory, the others voluntary.

5. *The Nature of God.*—Deistic, Theistic and Pantheistic conceptions and the need and possibility of Incarnation, as taught in various religions.

6. *The Nature of Man.*—The meaning of Sin, Salvation, the Kingdom and Immortality. Also of *Karma, Nirvana, Paradise,* &c.

N.B.—These two last subjects cover not only Philosophy, Doctrine, Creeds and Articles but also Ethics and Social Problems.

7. *God's Approach to Man.*—Doctrines of Revelation, Prophecy, Inspiration, Guidance, and Scripture, as found in various religions and especially in the Bible.

8. *Man's approach to God.*—The meaning of Prayer, Sacrifice, Sacraments. The use of music, of symbols, of ritual. The conduct of public and private worship.

# AN AFRICAN APOLOGIST

By the Rev. E. J. Martin, B.D., Vicar of St. John's, Rastrick, Brighouse.

THE meaning of the past is to be understood not by reading the history of the past, but by reading the men of the past. This remains true, however dangerous it may be to draw the picture of an age from the opinions of an outstanding man of the age, for he may be outstanding not because he represents the mind of his time, but because he has outrun it. So Tertullian may be either the epitome or the idiosyncrasy of the second Christian century. Certainly he was for part of his life a member of a sect definitely branded as heretical, whatever we may understand heretical to be. And he belonged to the African Church. The African Church disappeared, blotted out of existence by Vandal and Mohammedan. Yet it was the most vigorous part of the early Christian society in the West. It produced the four greatest figures in Western Christianity in the first four centuries—Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius and Augustine, Lactantius making a fifth if Lactantius was an African. These were all excessive individualists. Tertullian, as we have noticed, became an avowed heretic, Cyprian *proprio motu* a rather rigid and dogmatic High Churchman, Arnobius makes Christianity a kind of rationalistic philosophy in which it is difficult to recognize the specifically Christian elements, and Augustine only came to Christianity through mazes of error and unbelief and remained a philosopher, if not a fanatic, to the end. It is in this way that most representative Christians misrepresent their fellows.

Tertullian was born in the middle of the second century (the year is unknown), the son of a native centurion in the service of the Roman proconsul at Carthage. He was brought up as a pagan, became a notable lawyer apparently practising in Rome, and possibly may be identified with the Tertullianus who appears in the Corpus of Roman Law. The date and occasion of his conversion are unknown, but the time must have been 190/195 A.D. For in 197 he is in Carthage and possibly ordained priest.[1] By 202/3 he has joined the Montanists, a

[1] But cf. *de Exhort. cast* 7. 'Are not even we laics priests?'

body of primitive Puritans or Methodists who are repudiated by the Church, and he died about 220, according to Jerome 'at a great age.'[2] Augustine seems to think that Tertullian had ceased to be a Montanist before his death.[3]

Into the Montanist movement we need not enter beyond saying that it originated in Phrygia and was concerned with practice rather than doctrine. The Montanists had a great devotion to the Holy Spirit and revived the primitive gift of prophecy, women prophets being conspicuous among them. They discounted marriage, entirely forbade second marriages, set up a system of excessive fasting and sternly denied absolution for sin after baptism. It is interesting to notice that the *Acts* of the martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas are the work of a Montanist (possibly Tertullian himself), and it is not unlikely that these martyrs were themselves Montanists. It ought to reduce our fear of heresy in that case to remember that Perpetua is commemorated in the Kalendar of the Book of Common Prayer.

In some ways the Montanist movement explains Tertullian. It is concerned with practice and not with doctrine. That describes the standpoint of Tertullian. It is true that dogmatic and orthodox theology does emerge in Tertullian, but it is as a tentative method of defence against error. The titles of all his surviving works show that his primary concern is with practical problems of the Christian society.

It is the same temper that makes Tertullian the first great obscurantist. Christianity not being in his view a philosophy, but a supernatural reality, it does not admit of intellectual handling. 'Away with all attempts at a Christian synthesis of Plato, Stoicism and dialectic . . . given belief we need no more belief.'[4] 'We are not bound to observe a thing because it is good, but because God has enjoined it.'[5] Scripture becomes a supernatural norm; what is not expressly allowed in Scripture must be understood to be forbidden. Philosophers therefore are mere hucksters, dealing in wisdom and eloquence, Athens is a city of babblers, Aristotle merits only contempt.[6]

[2] Hieron. *de Viris Illus.* 53.
[3] Aug. *de Haer.* 86.
[4] *de Praescr. Her.* 7.
[5] *de Poenit.* 4.
[6] *de Praescr. Her.* 7.

The celebrated saying about the Incarnation and Resurrection[7] is a brilliant paradox only in so far as it is a rhetorical exhibition of Tertullian's contempt for human reason. There is, as he says elsewhere, nothing in common between Christianity and philosophy.[8]

The rigorist position which Tertullian embraced so heartily almost inevitably implied an indifference to human reason. This position from the first owed its influence mainly to obscure and uneducated enthusiasts, of whom Hermas is an early milder example. Tertullian's *Apology* and his *de Pallio*[9] are, at their face value at least, the denial of the principles which in theory he accepted. The man who could reason like Tertullian, who could see the *anima naturaliter Christiana*,[10] was treading the path of rationalism on which Arnobius walked, not the mystic way of the childlike Hermas.

We can well imagine that the will to believe was very strong in Tertullian; we cannot be quite so sure that what he willed to believe, or rather practise (for with him belief is practice), always represented the mind of the Christian society. Tertullian becomes, therefore, a dangerous guide to the historian unless some discrimination is used to distinguish the common sentiment of the age from the particular opinions of Tertullian. At the same time *ex nihilo nihil fit*. What needs emphasizing is that the exaggerated ideals which Tertullian advocated were not a fanciful addition to the Christian scheme, but were logically developed from it. The laxer school prevailed and became orthodoxy; but the more rigorous party were not without status and arguments which have justified weaker positions than theirs. The wildest of Tertullian's views are not desperately remote from the views of the Apostolic Church. For his claims are never like those of the metaphysical heresiarchs; he never departs from moral and practical possibilities.

We have already noticed that Tertullian is orthodox in doctrine. It was in the sphere of Church order and social life that

[7] *de Carn. Chr.* 5; *Natus est dei filius: non pudet quia pudendum est*, etc. cf. *Ap.* 46.

[8] *de Praescr. Her.* 7. Philosophically Tertullian was if anything a materialistic monist. *Cf. de Anim.* 5.

[9] Cf. Boissier, *Fin du Paganisme*, Vol. I, pp. 221 sqq. [10] *Ap.* 17.

his independence of outlook was most assertive. It is generally believed, on the authority of Jerome, that Tertullian was ordained to the Christian priesthood, but he holds the office in some indifference,[11] and he claims that the isolated layman can celebrate a valid Eucharist.[12] On the other hand, he is a complete sacramental realist, and baptism especially is a rite of almost magical power. The gift it conveys is so tremendous that young unmarried persons and widows should delay their baptism until the passage of years has made them less liable to sin.[13]

Chastity indeed is simply an obsession with Tertullian. Women are the devil's gateway.[14] The phrases Tertullian uses of conjugal intercourse are usually condemnatory.[15] He not only notes with satisfaction that Christ was unmarried but refers to him as *spado*,[16] a word he also uses of St. Paul[17] and St. John the Baptist.[18] He can on occasion speak of marriage without contempt[19] but then it is an argument against misbelievers. Second marriages are absolutely anathema;[20] they are nothing but a species of fornication.[21] Marriage after divorce he prohibits because it means second marriage; we almost feel that divorce in itself is not a bad thing because it is a road of escape from the inherent evil of marriage. Nor does Tertullian regard children as desirable; they will be, he says, a heavy handicap at the day of judgment.[22]

Tertullian appears to find evil in pleasant things because by being pleasant they divert the soul from God. Even eating he would have prohibited if life could exist without it.[23] Beauty is evil and Christ himself was ugly.[24] Women after the age of twelve must wear veils to hide their faces.[25] Hermogenes is accused of deadly sin because he not only married a wife but was an artist.[26] The theatre is forbidden absolutely. Not only is the element of idolatry there but the pomp and display of the performances are snares of the devil.[27] There is something very familiar to an Englishman of the old-

[11] *de Exhort. cast.* 7. [12] *Ibid.* 7. [13] *de Bapt.* 18. [14] *de Cult. Fem.* 1 : 1. [15] *de Virg. vel.* 10; *ad Ux.* 1 : 1.; *de Cult. fem.* 2 : 9. [16] *de Monog.* 5. [17] *Ibid.* [18] *Ibid.* 17. [19] *de Anim.* 27. [20] *ad Ux.* 1 : 7. [21] *de Exhort. cast.* 9. [22] *ad Ux.* 1 : 5; cf. *de Exhort. cast.* 6. [23] *de Resur. Carn.* 61. [24] *de Carn. Chr.* 9; cf. *adv. Marc.* 3 : 17. [25] *de Cult. Fem. passim.* [26] *adv. Hermog.* 1. [27] *de Spect. passim.*

fashioned type in the warning that the theatre is 'the devil's house.'[28] All pleasure is dangerous, because it is more or less luxury, and luxury means licence. In his Montanist days Tertullian goes so far as to accuse the Christian society of indiscriminate licence at their Agapes.[29]

In the earning of his daily bread the Christian is also restricted. He cannot be a maker of idols, builder or decorator of temple or altar, astrologer or soothsayer. These prohibitions cause little surprise But neither may a Christian deal in anything which in any way can be used for pagan worship such as frankincense, nor may he be a schoolmaster, for it will fall to him to teach pagan mythology.[30] Financial operations of course were a close profession, because usury was strictly forbidden by Christians generally.[31]

The problems of public service are met in the same temper. Public office a Christian must ignore.[32] This is not only because of idolatrous associations, but because of its worldliness and 'devil's pomp.'[33] A Christian cannot attend an execution nor sit to judge a criminal case.[34] In fact Tertullian condemns all judicial proceedings in one of his destructive asides.[35] On the question of military service Tertullian is a pacifist not only from the danger of idolatry, but from the positive incompatibility of the sword and Christ.[36]

With the rarest exceptions[37] Tertullian stands consistently for a definite principle. This principle is that the hard way is the right way, and at all costs the hard way must be found. He lays it down to his brethren that persecution is the will of God for the proving of faith, and therefore he who avoids it commits deliberate sin; then he turns savagely on the bishops and accuses them of levying contributions from church members to bribe officials so that they may evade the law.[38] This is in his fullest Montanist course. But the principle runs through all his writings, orthodox and Montanist, and the temper is as hard as the principle. Of all his writings the *Apology* is perhaps the mildest, but the *Apology* is full of menace against paganism and savage contempt for its gods. Tertullian (and

[28] *de Spect.* 26. [29] *de Jej.* 17. [30] *de Idol.* 4 and 11.
[31] *adv. Marc.* 4 : 17. [32] *Ap.* 38. [33] *de Idol.* 17 and 18.
[34] *de Idol.* 17. [35] *de Anim.* 33. [36] *de Cor. Mil.* 11.
[37] *Ap.* 42; cf. *ad Scap.* 1. [38] *de Fug. in pers.* 13.

not he alone among the early Christian apologists) wings his Apology with threats in the plainest terms of the wrath of God against the ungodly.[39] With revolting joy he contemplates the prospect awaiting the righteous of gloating over the tortures of the damned.[40]

It is entirely debateable whether Tertullian does not represent a definite ideal of Christianity, that his views are more accurately representative of early Christian ideas than is sometimes believed; the difference between Tertullian the Catholic and Tertullian the Montanist is one only of degree, and it is often only a difference in degree also between his position and that of the New Testament. No menace flung at the pagan world and no rejoicing at the vengeance of the Lord can surpass the images and language of the Apocalypse.[41] The anti-natural view of marriage which has survived to the Anglican Book of Common Prayer is less explicit in St. Paul than in Tertullian, but not less actual.[42] Certainly it was conduct and moral ideals that bulked largest in early Christianity; or shall we say it was the insistence on moral ideals that commended Christianity to a world which hitherto had not naturally connected religion and morals. The Christians made much of the moral element which had attracted them so surely.

Tertullian is not given over wholly to gloom and harshness. The sweeter aspects of his character are set out at their best by Dr. T. R. Glover in the chapter on Tertullian in *The Conflict of Religions in the Roman Empire*.[43] It is not in Dr. Glover's nature to see anything but what is best and most Christian in all men. But what has most historical value in Tertullian is not the fact that he possessed the truer Christian virtues, but the fact that a stern and narrow moral ideal formed part of the content, if not the main content, of early Christianity and the fact that Tertullian marks the point of development when this ideal ceased to be orthodox and, whether for good or for evil, growing Christianity became laxer in morals and more rigid in doctrine. But even so the spirit of Tertullian did not

[39] *Ap. passim.* [40] *de Spect.* 30.

[41] *e.g.* Rev. 9 : 5, 16 : 10, 19 : 21.

[42] 'That such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry' (B.C.P.), cf. 1 Cor. 7-9, 26 sqq. For the objection to second marriages cf. 1 Tim. 3 : 2 and 12. [43] *Op. cit.*, ch. x.

perish. Nor shall we look for it only among those who prefer the guidance of the individual conscience to the mind of the Church. It has become a commonplace to speak of Tertullian, especially the Montanist Tertullian, as the forerunner of Puritanism. There have been outstanding men in the Church of England far nearer to Tertullian than any Puritan. In the earlier Tractarians, for example, the sternness of Tertullian's ideal was vividly reflected. There was much in the character of Pusey and more in his practice that connected him directly with Tertullian. The problem of sin and the relation of baptism to sin, the eye guarded against the lusts of the world, the mortified self, the features of Pusey's life which come to mind spontaneously, carry with them the touch of Tertullian. 'Be very watchful,' says Pusey, 'not to eat the least thing out of meals: it is Satan who would long to mar fasts, and it shows that the least thing is of consequence.'[44] Or again: 'Having given up all for God, do not be fixed to little trifles; for example, flowers.'[45] Quotation after quotation might be made to show that with Pusey, as with Tertullian, life is an eternal struggle with the devil and a certain fearful looking-forward to judgment.[46]

Or, to take another parallel. At the beginning of the twentieth century a remarkable Anglican even more conspicuously, probably more consciously, under the influence of Tertullian is Dr. Neville Figgis. More than once in his books Figgis quotes with reverent approval Tertullian's paradox on Christ.[47] Steadily throughout his definitely religious writings Figgis uses his wide reading and intellectual penetration to press, like Tertullian, the conclusion that reason is entirely invalid. Both of them learned obscurantists, they scatter the wealth of their knowledge and divert their readers with a purely intellectual joy, in order to deny the religious validity of the reason to which their writings appeal and they themselves do not.[48] At the

[44] Johnston and Newbolt, *Spiritual Letters of E. B. Pusey*, p. 340.

[45] *Ibid.* p. 338.

[46] Pusey had given considerable attention to Tertullian. He once thought of editing a text, and he did write the preface to Dodgson's translation in the Library of the Fathers. See Liddon, *Life of E. B. Pusey*, I, 436, II, 149.

[47] *de Carn. Chr.* 5, cited above.

[48] This may be most easily examined in *The Gospel and Human Needs*, which is both the best and most characteristic of Figgis's theological writings.

same time be it noted that this position is not convincing, but it is tenable. The most rationalistic believer in God will admit that God as God must be largely outside the range of human reason. The obscurantist argues that so little of God can be contained within the limits of reason that reason can have only the minimum of value for religion, the preponderating force of which must be sought in revelation and authority. The position is tenable: it is the position of Tertullian and of Figgis, as in a less logical degree it is the position of the Roman Church. Tertullian and Figgis deny the position by their writings, but both men would have retorted that their writings were an appeal to the unbeliever with the unbeliever's own equipment. They spoke in their hearers' language as one would speak to a child. But the aim of the appeal was to persuade those who heard to cast away the carnal weapons of reason and put on the weapons of God. What those who do not respond to this appeal will continue to question is how this absolute intellectual scepticism can be a weapon of any power but the power of darkness.

## TEACHING BY PARABLE*

By the Very Rev. W. R. Inge, D.D., Dean of St. Paul's.

'Without a parable spake He not unto them.'—(St. Mark iv. 34).

ALMOST all teaching consists in comparing the unknown with the known, the strange with the familiar. We are hardly able to explain what anything is, except by saying that it is like something else. Not only is the power of seeing resemblances the great secret of poetic diction, as Aristotle says, but prose is also made of metaphors, some alive and some dead. Our object in using metaphors or similes is not always to explain the less by the more familiar. Often it is to throw new light upon a thing, to make it more vivid and more real, by expressing the idea in another language—in the language, perhaps, of another sense—as when we speak of the silvery sound of a musical instrument, or the softness of an evening landscape. More especially, the description of the operations of nature in words borrowed from human life—in terms of affec-

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tion, will and purpose—is almost a necessity, and is disguised rather than avoided even in scientific treatises. Indeed, no interpretation of things can be given without the free use of metaphor, symbol or parable.

Religion is no exception to this rule, but furnishes the strongest examples of it. Men have allowed their imaginations the fullest scope, in their attempts to give definiteness and substance to the formless intuitions of the mystical consciousness. The symbols thus created tend to crystallize as rapidly as linguistic metaphors, and mythology is the result. Even among the Jews, who, by prohibiting visible representations of the Deity, escaped in a large measure this danger from the petrifying of religious symbols, we find a sacred poetry as full of imaginative pictures as that of other nations. When we read in the eighteenth Psalm that Jehovah rode upon the Cherubim and did fly, and came flying upon the wings of the wind; that He made darkness His secret place, His pavilion round about Him with dark water, and thick clouds to cover Him, we have before us word-pictures which differ only in the medium of representation from the drawings of William Blake. A curious example of this universal human tendency is the acted parable of the Old Testament prophets.

Our Lord does not seem to have made use of the acted parable, or of the bold poetical imagery of the old prophets. It was no part of His method to rouse excitement of any kind in the minds of His hearers. There is nothing, perhaps, which distinguishes His teaching from that of most popular preachers and teachers, even of the nobler sort, more sharply than its calmness and self-restraint. But His teaching was full of similes and parables. Indeed, our earliest Gospel seems to say, in my text, that His public teaching consisted mainly of those charming and homely little word-pictures drawn from the common life of the Eastern peasantry, each of which was intended to illustrate some aspect of the good tidings which He came to impart. His favourite opening in public preaching seems to have been, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like.' In the Fourth Gospel, as is well known, we hear nothing of parables. Their place is taken by symbolical expressions in the form of metaphors, such as 'I am the Door,' 'I am the Good Shepherd.' And the nature of God is described by saying that 'God is

Light' and 'God is Love.' The word used by the Evangelist for this symbolical language is *paroimia*, not *parabole*.

But there is one very significant feature about our Lord's method, which is attested both by the Synoptists and by the author of the Fourth Gospel. Our Lord had two methods of teaching, a direct and an indirect. He had one method for the multitude, and another for His own disciples. In St. Matthew we read that His disciples came and said to Him:

> 'Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?' And He answered, 'Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. But whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath. Therefore speak I unto them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do thy undrstand.'

So in St. John our Lord tells His disciples that even His last discourses to them had been spoken in proverbs, but that the hour cometh when He should no more speak to them in proverbs, but should show them plainly of the Father. This promise, like others of the same kind in the Gospel, is clearly meant to refer to the fuller understanding of our Lord's teaching which the disciples would obtain through the gift of the Holy Spirit, after His bodily presence had been withdrawn from them. St. John, as usual, gives a more spiritual turn to the Synoptic record of the two methods in our Lord's teaching. Not only had much been said to the multitude which could be fully understood only by the disciples, but much had been said to the disciples which could be fully understood by them only after the Spirit of Truth had come to guide them into all truth, and to testify of Him. These discourses are in fact the message of the glorified Christ to the third generation of Christians.

The necessity for veiling the deepest part of His teaching is attributed by our Lord, in the Synoptics, to the moral and intellectual shortcomings of the multitude. He gives His teaching in an external, symbolic form, because no other was suited to His hearers. And afterwards He expounds everything to His disciples.

St. Matthew gives two examples of this private exposition —in the parables of the Sower and of the Tares of the Field. Many, I think, must have felt surprise that explanations so

simple as these should have been asked for by the disciples, and should have been withheld from the multitude. They are just what any intelligent person who had heard the parables would have gathered the application to be, and they in no way answer the expectations aroused by the solemn words, 'To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.' Either the parables in question were entirely thrown away upon the multitude, or they gathered from them precisely those simple moral lessons which were afterwards given in plain language to the disciples. An obvious suggestion is that the evangelist felt himself at liberty to divulge these particular commentaries, just because they contained nothing esoteric. If our Lord used the phrase 'the mysteries of the Kingdom' in this connection, there must have been other teaching which differed in kind, as well as in form, from that which formed the staple of His public discourses. But it is very difficult to guess what this teaching could have been. If we are tempted to suggest that it may have resembled the Johannine handling of the Messianic hope, substituting, virtually, the coming of the Holy Spirit for the expected appearance of the Messiah in glory, we have to remember that the disciples did not assimilate this teaching, if it was ever given, and firmly believed that the return of their Master on earth would occur in the lifetime of some or all of them. The question, in fact, cannot be answered, and perhaps we are justified in thinking that not much of our Lord's actual teaching has been lost to us in this way. The examples of His private explanations given by St. Matthew are far from suggesting such recondite and cryptic utterances as we find in some of the apocryphal sayings of Christ.

If we were dealing with a professed philosopher, we might think otherwise. The prejudice against writing down the most intimate and precious parts of a doctrine was very strong in antiquity. Plato himself, if with many modern scholars we accept one of his letters as genuine, has robbed us of that part of his message which he himself thought most valuable; and the notion of a *disciplina arcani* was fostered by the Gnostics, and then by the Alexandrians, both Christian and Pagan. I need not trace the history of the alleged secret tradition of the Christian Church. It soon became a mere expedient for the defence of orthodox authority; and we cannot suppose that

a syllable of our Lord's real teaching was handed down in this way.

This only we seem to be justified in saying, on the authority of the Synoptic Gospels, that our Lord in some sort recognized the principles of reserve in imparting religious truth, and the necessity of giving it different forms in addressing different classes of people. It is also important that He sanctioned, and used habitually, the method of parable, that is, of dramatic presentation of spiritual lessons under forms easily understood. Our Lord must have been aware that a price has to be paid for all picture-book theology, in the creation of illusions in the minds of the hearers, which may easily stiffen into delusions and errors about matters of fact. The preacher who says, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like,' is understood to mean 'The Kingdom of Heaven is.' For example, the parable of the sheep and the goats is too often mistaken for a description of the last judgement. Personally, I think that He did not mean His language about His return in glory to be taken in the crude literal sense which His hearers gave to it. He taught His disciples practically nothing about the Judgement, heaven and hell, that was not part of the popular belief among the Jews. This applies to the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and to the promise made to the penitent thief. He did not invent myths about the future, like Plato.

We have not gained much help towards solving our practical problems by considering our Lord's method of teaching. The intellectual differences between the disciples and the multitude were, after all, not very great; and our Lord had no esoteric Gnosis to impart, such as Clement of Alexandria seems to have thought of.

But as soon as scholars and thinkers entered the Church the conflict between them and the simple believers began. It was and is a practical problem of great difficulty. As long as there is a sharp line of demarcation between the educated and the uneducated, the line of least resistance is to allow two types of religion—some kind of idealism for the educated, and what we may call (without meaning any offence) Catholicism for the ignorant. There ought not to be this sharp line of demarcation, and religion has suffered by it not less than secular civilization, In philosophy, Platonism was much injured by its practice of

teaching a crude dualism to the vulgar, as an explanation of the evil in the world, while reserving more refined speculations for the inner circle. To this day, Plato and his successors are misunderstood in consequence of this aristocratic exclusiveness. In the Middle Ages, the prevailing illiteracy and the practice of writing in Latin secured scholars against the perils and attractions of a reading public. There was no reading public. Popular religion was a mass of gross superstitions, with their centre in sacerdotal magic, while the divines were writing great works on systematic theology, and the mystics were exploring the highest regions of religious experience. During the whole of the Middle Ages there was no conflict between religion and science such as we are familiar with. Science was almost dead, and theology was quite abreast of the philosophy of the time, which, indeed, was studied mainly by ecclesiastics.

This anti-democratic restriction of religious thought to a small class of scholars is now quite impossible. An enormous mass of half-educated readers constitutes a new and very serious difficulty. No one who now writes a book knows into whose hands it may fall; and even a sermon or address intended for students is likely to appear in the daily press, strangely distorted, and divided absurdly by staring headlines, representing possibly the theology of the sub-editor, but not that of the writer. Many men who have a message are silenced by the fear of doing more harm than good by publishing it. In a democratically governed Church the half-educated decide what may and may not be said, and the scholars and thinkers naturally withdraw themselves from this kind of censorship.

Our worst difficulties are inherited from the time of the Renaissance. The age of the great schoolmen was over before the discoveries of Copernicus presented the Church with the gravest problem which it has had to face since the Europeanising of Christianity, which began with St. Paul. The whole fabric of theology had been built on the geocentric foundation. Theologians had, indeed, been allowed to say that God has His centre everywhere and His circumference nowhere. But for Christians generally the universe was a building in three storeys —heaven, the earth, and hell. The dogmas of the Christian faith were all fitted into this framework. The descent into Hades; the resuscitation of the material body of Christ to pre-

pare for its transportation into the sky, where God dwells; the return through the clouds; the ascent of the souls of men reunited with their bodies; the subterranean torture-chambers of the wicked; the spirits, good and bad, who flit about in the upper regions of the air—all this fell into its place in a pre-Copernican universe, and was believed in as scientific fact. By no ingenuity can most of it be fitted into the framework of the universe as for nearly four hundred years we have known it to be. The Church of the Renaissance did not realize the importance of the crisis. It condemned Galileo; and though for some time past even Roman Catholics are not compelled to say that the sun revolves round the earth, the implications of Copernican astronomy in the field of dogma have never been faced, and are not faced to-day.

Compared with this unhealed wound, more recent discoveries, such as the doctrine of evolution, the ascent of man from lower animal types, the antiquity of our globe, and all the results of Biblical and historical criticism, are unimportant. The great question at issue between science and theology is four hundred years old. The scientific doctrine which destroyed the traditional world-view of the Church is no longer a hypothesis, but an undisputed fact; and there has been no readjustment in theology to meet the situation. This most necessary task would be taken in hand at once if the direction of affairs were in the hands of our Christian thinkers, or of the educated public. It is not taken in hand because we are ruled by half-educated Christians, and by ecclesiastics who feel their pulse.

There is no reason whatever to think that our Blessed Lord meant to strew intellectual difficulties of this kind in the way of His followers. His demands in the ethical sphere are stern enough. We are bidden to take up the Cross and follow Him. But assuredly He did not require of us to outrage our scientific conscience as a condition of following in His steps. These burdens, grievous to be borne, are not part of the burden of the Cross. They are laid on the shoulders of men and women by our traditionalists, and they hinder many who wish to take up the Cross as our Master bade us.

There is no reason for hard words or hard thoughts on either side. There are some, it seems, who have really persuaded

themselves that there is a conspiracy of traitors who wish to break up the Christian faith by betraying the fortress from within. What possible motive could there be for such a plot? Ambition and self-seeking would never prompt a man to be a Liberal theologian. There are no doubt some students who forget the deep and vital interests which are entwined with the historical and scientific problems which they discuss; but even they should be acquitted of any sinister intention. Most of those who wish to see the shackles of tradition relaxed are only conscious of the injustice and folly of compelling men and women in the twentieth century to live in a pre-Copernican universe. They think that the truth should make us free, as free as those can be who are pledged to bring every thought under the obedience of Christ. And, on the other side, charges of obscurantism should not be brought recklessly. A readjustment of traditional dogma is a very delicate and difficult operation; and ecclesiastics cannot disregard the convictions and prejudices of a clientèle who are very reluctant to accept anything new. Much has already been done, for which we should be grateful. And there is something more to be said, which so-called Modernists especially should lay to heart.

'Without a parable spake He not unto them.' Can we really escape from the law that while on earth all our knowledge must be partial and largely symbolic? Take, for instance, the scientific view of the world, which claims to be coherent and all-embracing, and sometimes demands that all religious beliefs should be brought under its categories. I should be the last to disparage the wonderful discoveries of the last hundred years. Science has proved the soundness of its working hypotheses by a career of uninterrupted and brilliant success. But would it not be true to say that science, for its own purposes, disregards a whole range of higher values, all the imponderables which make up the best part of human life? If we believe, as the religious man does believe, that these ultimate and eternal values are the most real things in our experience; that they are not merely ideals, but the highest order of facts, the creative and living thoughts of God, who made the world and all things that are therein; then we cannot be satisfied with a philosophy which aims at a complete explanation of the world without those values, which classifies things by their roots and

not by their fruits, and often forgets how much of the world as known to science is really a mental construction, based itself on a valuation, and that a very imperfect one. All the external world is but a symbol, a parable, a figure of the true. It can teach us much, but not everything.

'Without a parable spake He not unto them.' Can philosophy escape from this limitation? Let us suppose that we have found some great school of thought—say Christianised Platonism—intellectually satisfying, and that we can therefore believe without doing any violence to our reason. Yet when we try to realize its doctrines, and make them a home for our living faith and hope and love, am I wrong in saying that they begin at once to take a parabolic form? The eternal is translated into unending duration; pictures of a local habitation of blessed spirits come back unbidden; the spiritual mode of existence is immobilized in a statuesque stability, by contrast with what the Indians call *samsara*, the mad whirl and dance of birth and death in the world of sense. Our imagination restores just those parables, which we thought we had left behind. A superior Being might not see any generic difference between our mythologies and our philosophies. 'Without a parable spake He not unto them.'

These thoughts should suggest humility, and tolerance even of the intolerant. But the obligation remains to offer to God our best science and our best philosophy, for these are parts of His revelation of Himself. We shall not correct the limitations of scientific truth by mixing it with scientific falsehood—to do this is to confound one scheme of values and to degrade another—nor imitate the great pioneers of our faith by refusing to change anything.

The recognition that God teaches us by parables in no way implies that there is no such thing as absolute truth, or that it must be always beyond our reach. Indeed, I think it implies just the contrary. If there were no absolute truth there would be no symbols; there can be no shadow without a substance. As Isaac Penington says: 'All truth is shadow except the last. But all truth is substance in its own place, though it be but a shadow in another place. And the shadow is a true shadow, as the substance is a true substance.'

# REGINALD PEACOCK

John Foxe, in the *Book of Martyrs*, supplies the information that Reynold Peacock, bishop of Chichester, ' was afflicted by the pope's prelate for his faith and profession of the gospel.' The thought, however, of his being claimed as a Lollard martyr would have made Peacock turn in his grave, for his active life was largely occupied in diligent anti-Lollard propaganda.

The suppression of Wycliffism at Oxford by Archbishop Arundel, and the defection of the nobility from the new anti-clericalism, did not leave the movement void of vitality. The Bible had been translated into the vernacular, and proved, as it always will, a force subversive of established interests—Lollard pamphlets continued to be written, distributed, and greedily devoured; and the poison spread rapidly through the organism of society. The temper of the rabble waxed dangerous; and the preservative *entente* between the privileged classes, both lay and clerical, seemed an inadequate bulwark against anarchy. The events of 1381 were still remembered, and present signs of the times were not wanting. In 1449, Adam Molyns, Bishop of Chichester, was brutally murdered when paying off sailors at Portsmouth after the recent *debâcle* in France. A similar fate befel another unpopular ecclesiastic, William Askew, Bishop of Salisbury, whom the mob thus upbraided: ' That fellow lived with the king and did not reside in his diocese with us, nor keep hospitality, therefore he shall die.'[1]

*Episcopi Anglicani semper pavidi* was not an applicable proverb in those days, and the bishops, in the face of a menacing situation, were not wanting in spirit. They fought their critics with faggot and prison, and relying on the innate conservatism of Englishmen, abated no jot of their claims and bettered none of their habits. Peacock himself, who had been raised, by the influence of his patron, Humphrey Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester, to the See of St. Asaph in 1444, had boldly preached a highly provocative sermon at St. Paul's Cross in 1447 in defence of the two most widely criticised of episcopal practices. His unblushing advocacy of an unpreaching and non-resident prelacy aroused a storm of indignant criticism, even in circles innocent of all Wycliffian taint. Many rigid Anglicans, besides the whole body of the Lollards, lifted up their voice on high. The bishops, however, took a lenient view of the offence; Peacock's pardonable indiscretion was overlooked, and in a couple of years he found himself the object of further promotion; on the murder of Molyns he was translated to Chichester.

Peacock would have served his own interests more wisely had he been able to rest satisfied with this single exhibition of zeal for his order and his Church. He was determined, however, to give popular expression to his conviction that the Lollard principles were intellectually untenable, only requiring to be exposed to be ridiculous. And he proposed, with (as it turned out) excessive optimism, to substitute reason and information for the faggot as an agent of conversion. He became ' the author of a most sincere and noble-minded attempt to exhibit a rational basis for belief in the principles, ordinances, and usages of the Christian Church.'[2] The attempt was laudable, but it failed; and for the familiar reason that it takes two to tell the truth, one to hear, and one to understand.

[1] Babington, *Repressor* in Rolls Series, p. xvii.
[2] Gairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation*, Vol. I, p. 242.

The second *desideratum* was wanting, in spite of Peacock's determined attempt to supply it by divesting himself of the usual scholastic pedantry, abandoning the professional Latin, and addressing the laity in their mother-tongue. An early work, his *Donet,* i.e. *Grammar,* or *Introductory to the Christian Religion*, was specially designed 'to be of little quantity, that well-nigh each poor person may by some means get cost to have it as his own'; and even this short and popular book was simplified, by a process of selection, into a pamphlet styled *The Poor Man's Mirror,* which was intended to reach the same public as eagerly devoured Wycliffite manifestos.

On the year of his promotion to Chichester appeared perhaps the most important of Peacock's controversial works: *The Repressor of over myche wytynge (blaming) of the Clergie*, commonly called the *Repressor,* and constantly alluded to by the author under the short title. The name indicates the book's purpose, which was to provide a reasoned justification for some traditional Church usages (and even, as we may now think, abuses) upon which Lollard critics had been concentrating their attacks. Peacock undertakes to justify eleven such practices (or 'governances') of the clergy: (1) The use of images; (2) The going on pilgrimage; (3) The holding of landed possessions by the clergy; (4) The various ranks of the hierarchy, i.e. papacy and episcopacy; (5) the framing of ecclesiastical laws and ordinances by papal and episcopal authority; (6) The institution of religious orders; (7) The invocation of Saints and priestly intercession; (8) The costliness of ecclesiastical decorations; (9) The ceremonies of the mass and sacraments generally; (10) The taking of oaths; (11) The maintaining war and capital punishment to be lawful. Probably owing to exigencies of space,[3] Peacock only dealt with the first six of these. For the remaining five, he refers his readers to his other works, of which some were already published, while others were in preparation.

The questions at issue might be reduced to the single problem of the Authority of Scripture; for it was on the ground that they were unscriptural that the above practices were generally criticised. And in apologising for them Peacock does not attempt to prove that they are scriptural, but rather that they are reasonable; implying that there are other sanctions which may be no less divine or authoritative than Holy Scripture. He suggests that it is no part of the office of Scripture to found any law of God which man's reason may discover by the light of nature, and that the truth of God's moral law does in fact rest not upon Scripture (for it existed before the Scriptures were written), but upon the judgment of the reason. The ultimate authority is the natural moral law, the 'lawe of kinde which was bifore the tyme of Jewis,' and consequently 'is not founded in Holi Scripture of the Newe Testament, neither in Holi Scripture of the Oold Testament, neither in hem bothe to gidere. Forwhi this lawe was whanne neither of the Newe neither of the Oold Testament writing was.' Hence the ultimate authority is to be looked for not in Scripture, 'but in the book of the lawe of kinde writen in mennis soulis with the finger of God as it was so groundid and written bifore the daies ofAbraham and Jewis.'[4]

The argument, assuming as it does the objective existence of a definite moral law independent of the developments of which the Old and New Testaments contain the history, may not appeal to us. For us the 'law of kinde' stands not at the beginning, but at the end of, and dependent on, a long process of development: yet, the presuppositions of the time

[3] Babington's *Introduction* to the *Repressor* in the Rolls Series, p. xxii.
[4] *Repressor*, Part I, Chap. IV.

(accepted by both sides of the controversy) being what they were, the argument had force, and was perhaps unanswerable. At least no adequate answer to it was forthcoming. And, as basing morals upon reason, it may be said to be the earliest English attempt at a rationalistic ethic.

Peacock was not afraid of logical conclusions, and went so far as to say that whenever any moral truth, as delivered in Scripture, appears to contradict the moral law written in man's soul, the sense of Scripture must be accommodated to the judgment of the reason; not *vice versa*.[5] The theory was a bold one at the time. Yet the subordination of Scripture to reason had no connection, in Peacock's case, with its subordination to popular prejudice or superstition. He had no sympathy for the Lollard opinion that devout ignorance could be a competent guide in these regions. He insists repeatedly on the necessity of a learned clergy to expound the Scriptures, and to settle the differences of interpretation which arose quite commonly (in spite of their inerrancy) among humble Christians themselves. Exegesis is not the business of the saint, but of the scholar. The respective excellencies of these two classes lie in different spheres: 'To be good and holy is a labour of the will,' but 'to find the verri and just undirstonding of processis in Holy Writt is a labour of the witt or of the intellect.'[6]

Peacock's rationalism, excessive as we might now think it, is here again in evidence. But he is on surer ground when, further on in the same chapter, he expresses the belief that every true opinion will bear the light, and that argument tests truth as fire tests gold.

'And therfore Goddis forbode that any Christen man schulde think and trowe to be a trewe and a good governance forto kepe hise feiths and his othere opiniouns privey, and lete hem not come into what ever examynacioun of argument is whiche mowe be mad there upon' (Part I, ch. xvii). Indeed this superstitious fear of reason seems to Peacock more worthy of Mohammedans than of Christians.

All this, however, might not go all the way to reconcile an impartial critic to current ecclesiastical practices and usages which 'the doom of resoun,' without the help of Scripture might not sanction, but condemn. The new authority which Peacock substitutes for the old might, after all, give the verdict to the Church's enemies. The philosophic bishop was aware of this, and he attempts to justify the ecclesiastical practices already specified at the bar of reason.

He first of all suggests (which may seem a change of ground) that these practices, which are not directly enjoined by Scripture, may yet, broadly speaking, be grounded in Scripture, if Scripture recommends certain ends for which these practices are means. For to command anything involves the implicit sanction of whatever logically springs from the command, i.e. sanctions the means and instruments which may seem most efficacious.

Furthermore, the failure of Scripture to mention any practice, does not necessarily involve that practice in illegality or immorality. Otherwise it would not be right to drink beer or even (this is a home-thrust) to read the Bible in English! And the circumstance that pilgrimages are not expressly enjoined in the Bible does not prove them to be unlawful.

[5] 'If eny semyng discorde be bitwixe the wordis writen in the outward booke of Holi Scripture and the dom of resoun, writen in mannis soule and herte, the wordis so writen withoutforth oughten to expowned and be interpretid and brought forto accorde with the doom of resoun in thilk mater; and the doom of resoun oughte not forto to expowned, glosid, interpretid, and brought for to accorde with the seid outward writing in Holi Scripture.' (Part I, Ch. V.)

[6] *Repressor*, Part I, Ch. XVII.

Thus, Peacock's controversial method may be described as the application of enlightened common-sense to the interpretation of Scripture, in contrast with the pedantic literalism of his opponents (and, it should be added, of the Church party as well). Needless to say, he is not always convincing, nor his arguments devoid of sophistry; as where he justifies the practice of the Franciscans who were in the habit of counting coins with a stick, lest they should infringe the regulation of their order against touching money. Still, Peacock makes out a fair case for some practices which were either beneficial or harmless, and had been condemned with too little qualification by hasty and ill-informed criticism. Concerned, as we are, with his general philosophic principles rather than with details of argument, we need not follow Peacock into the labyrinth of fifteenth-century church controversy; still, a brief examination of his *apologia* for images is not without interest, as it represents his critical method, which is a combination of argumentative subtlety (which sometimes almost degenerates into sophistry) and critical boldness.

The Second Commandment was, of course, the *locus classicus* for his opponents on the question of Images. Six arguments are adduced to prove that this passage does not condemn the use of images *in toto*: (1) God himself commanded images of cherubim to be made for the Tabernacle; (2) The serpent and other images were made for the Israelites by the command, or with the approval, of God; Solomon also made images for his Temple; (3) Christ approved of using money stamped with the image of an earthly ruler, which sanctions images of a heavenly ruler (4) Where an image is condemned in Scripture, it is the image of some false god, and it cannot be proved that this was not the kind of image condemned in the Second Commandment; (5) If the word *image* in this Commandment signifies no more than a false god, it does not forbid the use of images when not used as Gods; (6) All other places of Scripture which seem to condemn images in general are to be understood as condemnations of images of false gods.

Having thus refuted objections founded on Scripture, the apologist proceeds to justify images by an appeal to reason. Reason can only condemn them on one of the three following grounds: (1) that they give occasion to idolatry; or (2) to absurd opinions; or (3) to moral vices. With regard to the first ground, no man that is 'come into yearis of discresioun and is passid childhode, and which is not a natural fool' takes an image for a god or worships it as such. And with regard to the second ground, it may be true that 'simple men trowen at sumtyme that an ymage hath withinne him vertu, such as God mai putte into a creature; or that the ymage dooth miraclis, or spekith at sumtyme, or heereth alwey, or swetith at sum tyme'; yet 'discrete men mowe oonli laughe at such folies,' and no such error need warrant 'the upsetting of ymagis, whilis therbi myche moral good cometh.' And with regard to the third ground, that images lead to moral vices, *e.g.*, covetousness or pride, the same can be said of many other things such as 'profitable crafts and marchaundising,' and (again Peacock cannot resist the opportunity) the practice of laymen reading the Bible in English. His general conclusion may be summed up in his own formula that 'It is not unleeful ymages to be had and usid as rememorative signes.'[7]

The *Repressor,* though written in English, spoke a language which few contemporary Englishmen, clerical or lay, understood, and which those who did understand it detested. If it converted few Lollards, it can have attracted still fewer Churchmen. Ecclesiastics were suspicious of

[7] *Repressor*, Part II, Ch. V.

an apologetic which seemed to rest too much upon fallible reason. These critical methods might dispose of the Lollards, but they might also dispose of the Church. It is fortunate that a refutation of the *Repressor,* written from the point of view of the Church party by one John Bury, an Augustinian friar, is still extant. This performance, with the spirited title *Gladius Salomonis,* is dedicated to Thomas Bourchier the Primate, upon whose learning and orthodoxy the prudent author, with accomplished servility, relies to revise the work and correct any errors it may contain. The pamphlet is in the best controversial Latin: *nefandus ille Reginaldus Pecokke* comes in for a rain of vigorous denunciations, and the root of his manifold errors is declared to be his impious exaltation of reason above Scripture; and against this Bury will lay his axe.[8]

The *Repressor* was not the most formidable, though it may have been the longest, of the works of Peacock, who was an astonishingly prolific writer.[9] One of his Latin works, *The Just Apprising of Doctors* (a complement to his *Just Apprising of Holy Scripture*), seems to have caused some scandal. He was afterwards charged with 'having reproached the holy doctors Augustine and Jerome,' and with having 'denied the truth of their sayings.' It was observed, too, that the Apostles' Creed, as given in *The Donet,* was shorn of one important article: the Descent into Hell, which Peacock does not seem to have regarded as of apostolic authority. And with regard to the creed itself, Peacock was afterwards accused of having denied the traditional view of its compilation by the twelve apostles.

The other notable surviving work of Peacock's, the *Book of Faith,* appears to have been published some seven years after the *Repressor.* The book attempts to supply a theory of faith, and discusses the relative importance of the two sources of revelation, Scripture and Church Tradition.

Peacock's view of faith is characteristically rationalistic. He will accept no theory which bases it either upon will or upon mystical insight, expressly dissociating himself from those who hold 'that feith is a knowing of a thing not bi strength of evidence . . . but bi assignement of the wil' (Part I, ch. v), for 'stidefastness of clevyng is oft tyme as greet to a fals article as to a trewe.' As for theories of divine illumination, whereby 'the understonding and the wil hath suerte of the trouth bileeved, though not cleerte (clear understanding) of the trouthe bileeved,' this is 'fantasie.' (Part I, ch. v.) Faith, on the contrary, is *knowledge,* 'a kind of knowledge a man gains from another person which may not lie, or who is God,' and not, as is the case with other knowledge, by 'natural wit.' Thus faith differs from ordinary intellectual processes, for though it is always 'groundable and provable by evidences in reason'; yet its articles are, in the last resort, to be believed 'for the infallible truth of the affirmer, which is God.'

Nothing here need have disturbed clerical susceptibilities, had Peacock resisted the temptation to emphasise the intellectual apathy of contemporary churchmen who devoted 'more labour aboute worldi kunnyng of lawe, and of wynnyng, and about beneficis and worchipis, than aboute the kunnyng of substancial schole of divinity, other than myche such as

[8] 'Non singulas haereses discutere . . . curavi, sed ad totius (ut arbitor) sui mali radicem, ubi rationis humanae titulos in morum directione Scripturis Sanctis praefert, exquisiti studii libuit mittere securim.' Epistle Dedicatory: printed in Babington's edition of the *Repressor* (Rolls Series).

[9] Six works in English are extant: *The Donet, The Repressor, The Book of Faith, The Follower to the Donet, The Book or Rule of Christian Religion* (in three parts), and *The Poor Men's Mirror.* The titles only of thirty other works, in Latin and English, have survived.

serveth for sermouns in pulpit, which lay men trowen al to be substancial divinitie.' In these pages, some measure of indignation betrays itself: Peacock evidently felt that the Church's case against the Lollards was overwhelming, were it not being betrayed on all hands by an indolent, ignorant, and complacent clergy. 'Whether such preparations (*i.e.*, a rational apologetic) are in progress among the clergy, I express no opinion, but leave it to others: for my part I dread, and pray.'

It was the Second Part of *The Book of Faith,* however, which was least congenial to contemporary Church opinion. Peacock here discusses the relative importance, for faith, of the Church and of Scripture. In the *Repressor,* Scripture was the final authority for revealed truths (although the authority for moral truths was 'the lawe of kinde' or 'the doom of resoun'); and in *The Book of Faith,* Scripture preserves its precedence over the Church. Here Peacock utilises an argument worthy of attention as illustrating his habit of applying common-sense considerations where such means were very rarely employed. The tradition that no Scripture had existed until Moses had been utilised to depreciate the authority of Scripture, in favour of that of the Church. But Peacock puts the question, How can one tell that no Scripture existed before Moses? Records of early writing exist: Enoch founded letters,[10] and the patriarchs may have composed records. 'And so at the laste, Moises gaderide al this togider, and made a book thereof which is clepid genesis; and certis this is more likli, by storie before allegid, and by resoun togidere, than forto seie that Moyses had bi inspiracioun without eny manys before govun to him informacioun, namelich sithen we owen forto not feyne, trowe or holde eny myracle to be doon, save whanne need compellith us thereto, that is to seie, that we mowe not save the caase otherwise bi liklihood of resoun.'

This is perhaps the earliest English attempt (*B. of F.*, Part II, ch. iii) to solve the problem of the Pentateuch: Moses compiled Genesis out of written stories, and no miracle was involved in the process. This is a theory the Lollards could hardly be expected to accept, nor (for that matter) the Church party either. Peacock had a genius for exciting the hostility of opposite parties against himself, and at that period his activities could only have the one end. 'It was Reginald Peacock *contra mundum,* from the King and archbishop down to the very London mob.'[11]

The storm soon burst over his devoted head. The Duke of York, who had his eye upon the Crown, posed, like Absalom, as a redresser of grievances and a remover of evil counsellors from the royal presence. Peacock, with the glad connivance of his ecclesiastical enemies, was marked down. At a royal council held at Westminster in October, 1457, at which Peacock, in his capacity as a lord spiritual, was present, a loud clamour was raised for his expulsion. He had written on profound subjects in the English tongue; he had despised Church Doctors, saying *Pooh! Pooh!* when passages from their works were produced against him; he had even made a new creed of his own, and denied that the Apostles' Creed was composed by the Apostles. He had even written a letter to Canning, Lord Mayor of London (who had dutifully forwarded it to the King), containing seditious matter, exciting England to a change of faith and an insurrection.

With regard to the truth of these charges we have to admit the justice of the first, and also that Peacock's respect for Church Doctors fell short of what was customary in an age when men 'found an easy

[10] His authority for this statement is Petrus Comestor, quoted under the title of Master of the Stories.

[11] Mr. J. L. Morison's Introduction to the *Book of Faith,* p. 31.

solution to all difficulties in the pages of men whom they failed to understand.' He was widely read in their works,[12] and his attitude was one of critical appreciation. Of Jerome he had certainly said in the *Repressor* that 'his tongue was not the key of heaven or of earth,' and even of Aristotle, whom Aquinas had used as one of the two foundation-stones of Catholic Theology, he had said: 'What was Aristotil other than a lover of truth. . . . It likith not to me forto reverence and folowe Aristotil agens treuth. For wel y wote, it was nevyr Aristotilis wil that eny man schulde so do.'[13]

As for the last charge, which we may assume to have been the most fatal of them all, and without which the others perhaps would have failed of their effect, Peacock had undoubtedly sympathised with the pacific policy of Suffolk, who after the French *dêbacle* in 1450 was made the scapegoat of the national fury. There are passages in the *Repressor* which strike an anti-military note, and there is a reference in *The Book of Faith* which a keen patriot might not have cared to make,[14] especially at a time of national disaster. We may assume that the letter to Canning 'contained statements in it unguarded enough to take on a disloyal colour.'[15]

The upshot of this outburst of hostility was that Peacock was summoned to appear at Lambeth on November 11, and to bring his books with him. On the appointed day he presented nine of his works which were found to contain many erasures and passages written anew. The *Repressor* and *The Book of Faith* were among them. These were handed by the Primate to 24 doctors for examination. Peacock's request to be judged by his peers, *i.e.*, his equals in learning, was over-ruled, and can have done little to conciliate the nominees of the Archbishop. The assessors reported that Peacock's writings contained many errors and heretical opinions, as they were prepared to prove before the King in council. It was probably at this time that Bury's *Gladius Salomonis* appeared—an opportune moment for inflaming public prejudice. At the repeated examinations which followed, amongst other offences, two unfortunate passages in *The Book of Faith* were brought up against Peacock: he had criticised Gregory's *dictum* 'Faith hath no merit to which man's reason giveth proof,' convicting the Father of having contradicted himself in the same homily; and had declared that the article in the Apostles' Creed about the Holy Catholic Church involves merely an acknowledgment of the *existence* of a Catholic Church. 'To believe to a thing' and 'to believe a thing to be' are distinct ideas, and it is the latter which the Creed involves.

At the final examination, held perhaps at Lambeth, perhaps at Westminster, before the King, there was much and long disputing. Peacock was interrogated on the descent of Christ into Hell, on the authority of the

[12] Over twenty Fathers are quoted in the *Repressor*: and over thirty different schools of heretics (exclusive of Lollards) mentioned by name.

[13] *Follower to the Donet*, quoted by Morison, *op. cit.*

[14] The *Repressor* (Part V, Ch. VI) classes 'sowdiers wagid into Fraunce forto make miche morther of blood, yea, and of soulis, bothe in her owne side and in the Frensch side' with 'gileful artificers, unpiteful questmongers, and forsworen jurors.' And *The Book of Faith* argues that a Church may lose some of its powers, even while remaining the same Church, from the analogy of a nation: 'It folowith [not] if Yngland sumtyme myghte make such a conquest, therfore he schal be ever a power forto make lijk greet conquest.' A remark which was only too ill-timed. (Morison draws attention to these passages.)

[15] Morison, p. 56, who gives as his authority *Loci e libro veritatum*, p. 212. It seems to have been customary for public men at this period to commit as little as possible to writing, and in any case to destroy all their correspondence. Peacock would appear to have been wanting in discretion.

Catholic Church, on the power of Councils, the sense and understanding of Scripture, and other matters. The Archbishop at last delivered an address, beginning, 'Dear Brother, Master Reginald,' and ending by an offer of choice between recantation or the stake. 'Choose one of these two, for the alternative is immediate in the coercion of heretics.'[16]

Peacock was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made; indeed, even according to his own principles, as laid down in *The Book of Faith*, submission to ecclesiastical authority was necessary in the last resource, if the Church proved impervious to persuasion. He stood for a few moments in motionless silence, evidently taken much aback, and then replied as follows:—

> 'I am in a strait betwixt two. . . . If I defend my opinions and positions, I must be burned to death: if I do not, I shall be a bye-word and a reproach. Yet it is better to incur the taunts of the people, than to forsake the law of faith and to depart after death into hell-fire and the place of torment. I choose, therefore, to make an abjuration. . . .'

On the 3rd of December he abjured at Lambeth the condemned conclusions in a written form before the Primate and 24 doctors: and on the following day, a Sunday, he made his public recantation at St. Paul's Cross before 20,000 people. Peacock, arrayed in his episcopal habit, and accompanied by the Primate, the Bishops of London, Rochester, Durham, and many other ecclesiastics, knelt down and made his recantation:—

> 'I have made, written, and taken out and published many and divers perilous and pernicious doctrines, books, works, and writings, containing in them heresies and errors contrary to the faith catholic and determination of Holy Church, and especially these errors and heresies following.' And then follows a series of seven propositions in Latin (the conclusions written down the day before at Lambeth). The recantation ends thus: 'I here openly assent that my said books, works, and writings, for consideration and cause above rehearsed, be deputed unto the fire, and openly be burnt unto the example and fear of other.'

With his own hand Peacock delivered three folios and eleven quartos to the executioner, who threw them into the flames; and had be been within their reach, the mob would have hurled their author in along with them.

The rest of the story is soon told. Copies of the recantation were sent out and published in all the dioceses of the Canterbury province. On the 17th of December the University of Oxford marched in solemn procession to Carfax and there burnt every copy of Peacock's works that could be found in the City.[17] Doggerel verses 'in which the laws of humanity

[16] Babington shows that the Archbishop's speech 'is open to serious exception both as to facts and the interpretation of facts.' This quotation from St. Gregory is inaccurate, and his citation from St. Augustine is not to the purpose. Such considerations are interesting, but irrelevant: against heresy every weapon is legitimate, and inaccuracy needs no apology in a *defensor fidei*.

[17] Cambridge followed suit, as the following Statute of King's College indicates: 'Also that each scholar, in his admission to this our Royal College, after his year of probation, shall swear that he will not favour the opinions, condemned errors, or heresies of John Wycliffe, Reginald Peacock, or any other heretic whatsoever so long as he shall live in this world, under pain of perjury and expulsion *ipso facto*.' (Quoted by Coulton: *Social Life in Britain from Conquest to Reformation*, p. 76.)

and of prosody were alike disregarded,' appeared to signalise the victory :—

> 'Sic deplumatus, pavo fuit et spoliatus,
> Sicque sibi siluit, vox quia rauca fuit,' &c.

The exquisite rancour of theological hatred found its most consummate expression in a Latin pamphlet by John de Whethamstede, Abbot of St. Alban's, which speaks of a perfidious poisoner of the springs of faith being compelled to spew forth his venom in public. Certainly the victory was complete, for though Peacock (albeit a prisoner) managed to appeal to the Pope, who sent a sympathetic reply, an application by Bourchier to the King was effective. The appeal to Rome, which had often been made without scandalising any ecclesiastical conscience, was now represented as involving 'great contempt and derogation of His Majesty's prerogative and estate royal.' The King appointed a commission of jurists and divines to advise him how to deal with this recalcitrant offender. An ambassador was sent to his Holiness representing the dangerous character of the bishop's heresies, and Peacock, under promise of being provided with a competent livelihood—a promise accompanied by threats to apply the uttermost rigour of the law—was urged to resign office. Whether he complied is uncertain : but a successor to the see of Chichester was soon afterwards appointed, and Peacock was sent into custody at the Abbey of Thorney in Cambridgeshire. The Primate's instructions to the Abbot are still extant :—

> 'He shall have a secret closed chamber (having a chimney) and convenience within the abbey, where he may have sight to some altar to hear mass; and that he pass not the same chamber. . . . That he have no books to look on, but only a portuous (breviary), a mass-book, a psalter, a legend, and a Bible. That he have nothing to write with; no stuff to write upon : that he have competent fuel. . . . That he be served daily of meat and drink . . . as his disposition and reasonable appetite shall desire.' Forty pounds were assigned to the abbey 'for his finding.'

The accounts of the remainder of his life are very various. Perhaps the most probable version is that he soon afterwards died at Thorney, though there is no reason to suppose, with Foxe, that he was 'privily made away.' It is more likely that he died of tedium and of a broken heart. And, though not quite in Foxe's sense, he may be said to have been a martyr—in the unpopular cause of toleration and rational piety.

J. C. Hardwick.

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H. D. A. M.

* *Canon Barnett : his Life, Work and Friends.* Murray. 832 pp. with 16 illustrations. 6s. net. (Also in 2 vols. with 34 illustrations, 28s. net.)

# CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of the *Modern Churchman.*

Sir,

Having had the privilege of some acquaintance with M. Ménégoz and his work, I think that a short account of the *symbolo-fidéisme* referred to in the December-January *Modern Churchman* may interest those of your readers who have not had an opportunity of studying it.

The term 'symbolo-fidéisme' is compounded of two words denoting important contributions to current theology by Ménégoz and his friend Auguste Sabatier.

Sabatier's doctrine of *symbolisme* teaches that spiritual truth, being concerned with that which transcends human understanding, can only be expressed under material forms. So expressed, it becomes a 'symbol'[1]: a living organism consisting of soul and body; a veiled reality, of which the veil, inadequate to express it fully, half reveals and half conceals it. 'Qui dit symbole, dit tout ensemble occultation et révélation.'[2] Sabatier insists strongly on the necessity of distinguishing between the form and the substance. To identify them is to risk one of two opposite errors; that either (1) of revering the relative as absolute. or (2) of discarding the changeless together with the changing. 'There are two extreme tendencies to be avoided: that of the obstructive orthodoxy which tries to maintain a superannuated formula as sacred and inviolable, and that of the rationalism which, in its struggle against an antiquated formula, rejects the religious substance together with the perishable covering.'[3]

Ménégoz's 'fidéisme,' on the other hand, is concerned with the nature of faith, which he tells us is simply a matter of one's personal relation to God. He defines it as 'the consecration of the soul to God,' and again as 'the gift of the heart' to God, and he adds that by 'soul' or 'heart' he means our entire selves, the totality of our being.[4] This faith he distinguishes emphatically both from the forms—'good works'—in which it normally and variously finds expression, and from 'beliefs'—the acceptance of so-called authoritative statements—with which it has nothing in common. 'What saves us is faith, and not the acceptance of this or that dogma, however true it may be.'

These two teachings are so far from being incompatible that they were early recognized by the friends as completing and supporting one another. They were in consequence associated under a common name, which—to quote from Sabatier's 'Esquisse'—'expresses the two elements of religion, in their essential distinction and organic unity.' Ménégoz, on his part, in his analysis of the 'Esquisse,' regards this association as of the happiest augury. 'Symbolo-fidéisme,' he says, 'brings peace to the mind by the reconciliation of science and faith; peace to the heart by the reconciliation of the sinner with God; peace to the Church by the union of those who, though they may still be divided by formulas, are united by the strong and gentle links of a common faith, a common love, and a common hope. It reproduces, under modern forms, the eternal Gospel of Jesus Christ.'

Mary A. Woods.

[1] Sabatier, unlike most English writers, always gives the name of symbol to form and substance combined, not to form alone, applying both the term and twofold character to all religious utterances—prophecy, parable, or creed.

[2] *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion.*

[3] Ménégoz's *Analysis of Sabatier's 'Esquisse.'*

[4] *La Théologie de l'Epître aux Hébreux.*

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